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ACCENT
A QUARTERLY OF NEW LITERATURE
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ODYSSEUS ELYTIS:

Heroic and Elegiac Song for the Lost Second Lieutenant of the Albanian Campaign

Translated by Kimon Friar

I

There where the sun first dwelt
Where the weather would open with virginal eyes
As the air from the shaking of an almond tree snowed
And horsemen blazed up on the tips of the vegetation

There where the hoof of a sturdy plane-tree beat
And a flag fluttered earth and water on high
Where weapons never burdened a man's back
But all the toil of the sky
All the world shone like a waterdrop
In the morning, at the foot of the mountain.

Now, as from the sigh of a God, a shadow enlarges

Now agony stoops down with bony hands
Takes and smothers the flowers upon her one by one;
In the gorges where the waters stopped
The songs lie down famished for joy;
Monk-rocks with cold hair

Silently cut the consecrated bread of desolation.

Winter enters up to the brain. Something evil
Shall flame up. The hair of the horse-mountain grows savage

High up the vultures share the bread-cores of the sky.

II

Now in the muddy waters a shadow grows nervous;

The wind seized by the foliage
Vomits forth its dust
The fruits spit out their pits
The earth hides her stones
Fear digs a hole and scurries into it
In that hour when from bushes of the sky
The howl of the wolfcloud
Scatters on the hide of the field the tempest's tremors
And then spreads spreads the pitiless snow the snow
And then goes roaring over the fasting valleys
And then sets men to hailing each other:
Fire or sword!

For those who set forth with fire or sword
Evil will flame up here. Let the cross despair not,
Only let violets say their prayers far from the cross!

III

For them the night was a more bitter day
They melted iron, they chewed the earth
Their God smelled of gunpowder and mulehide

Every thunderbolt was a death astride the air
Every thunderbolt a man smiling on the other side
Of death — and let fate say what it will.

Suddenly the moment missed its mark and found courage
Facing the sun, it threw breadcrumbs into it —
Binoculars, telemeters, mortars froze!

The air tore as easily as cotton cloth!
The stones opened as easily as lungs!
The helmet rolled from the left side . . .

The roots in the earth moved only for a moment
Then the smoke scattered and the day went timidly
To deceive the tumult from the infernal regions

But the night half-rose like a trodden viper
Just as death for a moment stopped among the teeth —
Then burst out suddenly up to his pale fingertips!

IV

He lies down now on the scorched battle-coat
With a halted breeze on his quiet hair
With a twig of forgetfulness on his left ear
He resembles a garden suddenly abandoned by the birds
He resembles a song muzzled in the darkness
He resembles a clock of an angel stopped
Just when the eyelashes said: "So long, boys"
And amazement turned into stone . . .

He lies down on the scorched battle-coat;
The black centuries about him
Bark with the skeletons of dogs at the dreadful silence,
And the hours which have again become stone pigeons
Listen with attention;
But laughter was burned, but the earth was deafened
But no one heard the very last shriek
All the world was emptied with the last shriek.

Under the five cedars
With no other candles
He lies on the scorched battle-coat;
The helmet empty, the blood muddy,
At his side the half-finished arm
And between his eyebrows —
A small bitter well, fingerprint of fate
A small bitter black-red well
Well where memory grows cold!

O do not see O do not see from where his
From where his life has fled. Do not say how
Do not say how the smoke of the dream rose high
In this way then the one moment In this way then the one
In this way then the one moment abandoned the other,
And the eternal sun in this way suddenly left the world!

V

Sun, were you not the eternal one?
Bird, were you not the moment of joy which never rests?
Brightness, were you not the fearlessness of cloud?
And you, garden, music-hall of flowers,
And you, curled root of the magnolia-tree!

Just as the tree shakes itself in the rain
And the empty body blackens from fate
And a crazy man battles with the snow
And both eyes are on the point of tears —
For, the eagle asks, where is that brave young man?
And all the eaglets wonder where the brave young man is!
For, the mother asks sighing, where is my son?
And all the mothers wonder where the boy might be!
For, the companion asks, where might my brother be?
And all his companions wonder where the youngest might be!
They grasp the snow, the fever burns
They grasp the hand and it freezes
They go to bite bread and it drips with blood
They look at the sky far away but it blackens
Why why why why should death not bring warmth
Why such unholy bread
Why such a sky as this where once the sun dwelt!

VI

He was a handsome lad. On the first day of his birth
The mountains of Thrace bent down to show
The cheerful wheat on the shoulders of firm earth;
The mountains of Thrace bent down and spat on him[1]

[1] In the Greek baptismal ceremony the infant is spat on to indicate the eviction of the devil through the mouth, according to medieval belief and practice.

Once on the head, once on the chest, and once amid his crying;
Greeks came forth with terrible arms
And raised him up in the swaddling clothes of the North Wind . . .
Then the days ran, to see who could cast the farthest stone
They jumped about, riding the young mares
Then morning rivers rolled
Until the gypsy windflowers rang everywhere
And from the ends of the earth
The shepherds of the sea came to take the flocks of jib-sails
To where a sea-cavern breathed deeply
To where a great stone sighed!

He was a sturdy lad;
In the arms of the bitter-orange girls at night
He would soil the large garments of the stars,
Love was so huge within him
That in wine he tasted all the flavor of the earth
Joining in dance later with all the white-poplar brides
Until dawn should hear and spill the light into his hair
Dawn who with open arms would find him
Scratching the sun on a saddle of two small branches,
Painting the flowers,
Or with love singing a slow lullaby
To the small owls that lay awake all night . . .
Ah what a strong thyme was his breath
What a map of pride his naked chest
On which seas and freedom burst . . .

He was a valiant lad;
With his dull gold buttons and his pistol
With a manly air in his stride
With his helmet, a glittering target
(They entered so easily into his brain
He who had never known evil)
With his soldiers to left and right
And revenge for injustice done before him
— Flame upon lawless flame! —
With blood above the eyebrows.
The Albanian mountains thundered
Then they melted snow to wash

His body, silent shipwreck of dawn
And his mouth, small songless bird
And his hands, prairies of desolation
The Albanian mountains thundered
They did not weep
Why should they weep
He was a valiant lad!

VII

The trees are made of coal which the night cannot enflame.
The wind ravages, the wind is beaten, and again beaten.
Nothing. Amid the freezing cold the mountains huddle together
On their knees. And from the gorges howling,
From the heads of the dead the abyss ascends . . .
Not even Pity weeps any more. Like the crazy orphan girl
She wanders about, wearing on her breast a small cross of twigs
She does not weep. Zoned only with the black Akrokeravnia[2]

She mounts higher and plants a plaque of the moon
That the planets in turning may see their shadow perhaps
And hide their rays
And stop
There in chaos panting, ecstatic . . .

The wind ravages, the wind is beaten, and again beaten
The wilderness tightens her black shawl about her
Crouched behind month-clouds straining to listen
What is it which strains to listen, cloud-months away?

With the rags of her hair on her shoulders — ah let her be —
Half-candle half-fire a mother weeps — let her be —
In the frozen empty rooms where she wanders — let her be!
Because fate is not the widow of anyone
And mothers are made for weeping, and men for battling
Gardens for bringing to bloom the breasts of girls
Blood to be spent, surf to beat
And freedom to be born unceasingly like lightning!

---

[2] Mountains in Albania.

VIII

Well, tell the sun to find a new road
If it wishes to lose nothing of its pride
Now that its native land has darkened on earth;
Or then again with water and earth
Let it bring to an azure birth elsewhere a younger sister Greece!
Tell the sun to find a new road
Let it face no longer not even a daisy
Tell the daisy to sprout with another virginity
Not to be soiled by fingers which do not become her!
Separate the wild doves from the fingers
And let no sound tell of the water's passion
As the sky sweetly blows into the empty shell
Do not plant a sign of despair anywhere
But bring from the gardens of gallantry
The rosetree from which his spirit exuded
The rosetree from which his breathing played
At being the small bride-chrysalis,
Which changes as many costumes as satin has folds
In the sun, when goldflies are drunken with golddust
And the birds go in haste to hear from the trees
What progeny of what seed erected the famous earth!

IX

Bring forth new hands, for who shall go now
On high to lullaby the infants of the stars!
Bring forth new feet, for who shall join now
First in the folk dances of the angels!
New eyes — my God — for where shall the small lilies
Of the beloved go now to bow themselves down!
New blood, for with what joyous greeting shall they all light up,
And mouth, cool mouth of brass and amaranth
For who among the clouds will say now "Your health, boys!"

Daytime, who will defy the peach-tree leaves
Nighttime, who will domesticate the green crops
Who will scatter green church-lamps in the fields
Or shout courageously, confronting the sun
To wear tempests, astride an invulnerable horse

And become the Achilles of the shipyards!
Who will ascend the black and mythical desolate island
To kiss the pebbles with reverence
And who will sleep
To pass by the Euboeans of the dream
To find new hands, feet, eyes
Blood and speech
To erect himself again on the marble threshing floors
And to fall upon — ah this time —
And to fall with all his holiness on Death!

X

The sun, sound of brass, and the holy mistral
Vowed on his breast, "Life, may I take joy of you!"
There was no room there for a darker power
Only with light spilled from a laurel bough
And silver from coolness, only there the cross
Flashed like lightning, as Greatness was dawning
And Goodness appeared with sword in hand
To say from within his eyes and their flags, "I live!"

Hello there river who would at daybreak see
A similar child of God with a twig of pomegranate
In his teeth, perfuming himself with your waters;
And a hello to you, wild medlar tree who waxed manly
Whenever Androutsos[3] wished to enter into his dreams;
And you, small spring of midday that reached up to his feet
And you, O maiden who were his Helen
Who were his bird his Madonna his Pleiades
For if the love of man in life
Should ring out but once only, lighting up
From star to star the hidden firmaments,
Then everywhere always the godly echo shall reign
To adorn the woods with the small hearts of birds
And the words of poets with lyres of jasmine
And torment secret evil wherever it might be
And flaring up, torment secret evil wherever it may be!

[3] Odysseus Androutsos — one of the greatest and most violent guerilla heroes of the Greek War of Independence.

XI

Those who did evil — because sorrow
Had taken their eyes, went staggering,
Because terror had taken
Their sorrow, vanished in the black cloud
Back! and with feathers no longer now on their foreheads
Back! and with nails no longer now on their feet
Without monsters of iron and batterings of fire
There where the sea undresses vineyards and volcanoes
To the fields of their country again, and with the moonplow
To the rocks of their country again, and with the mandolin Zallongo[4]
Back! to the places where the houndlike fingers
Sniff out the flesh and where the storm lasts
As long as white jasmine on the summer of women!

Those who were guilty of evil — a black cloud took them
They had no life behind them with fire and the cold waters
With lamb, wine and shooting of guns, a spit, a cross of vine-twigs
They had no grandfather of oak and of frenzied wind
In ambush for eighteen nights and days
With embittered eyes;
A black cloud took them — these did not have behind them
An uncle who fired the cannon, a father who packed the powder
Mother who had killed with her own hands
Or a mother's mother who with naked breast
Gave herself dancing to the liberation of Death!

They who were guilty of evil — a black cloud took them
But he who faced it on the roads of the sky
Ascends alone now and blazing with light!

XII

With a morning stride on the growing grasses
He ascends alone and blazing with light . . .

[4] Hemmed in by the Turks during the Greek War of Independence, the women of the town of Zallongo danced their ring-dance by the edge of a precipice. At each turn of the dance, a woman with her infant in her arms would hurl herself down the precipice to her death rather than fall into the hands of the Turks.

Flowers and tomboys wave to him secretly
And speak to him in a high voice that turns into mist on the air
And even the trees bend toward him lovingly
With their nests thrust into their armpits
With their branches dipped in the oil of the sun
Miracle — what a miracle, low on the earth
White races with an azure plowshare cut the fields
The mountain ranges flash like lightning far away
And farther away the inaccessible dreams of the mountains of spring!

He ascends alone and blazing with light,
So drunk with light that his heart shows through
And the true Olympus can be seen amid the clouds
And the hosannahs of his comrades in the air around . . .
The dream now beats more quickly than blood
On the sides of the footpaths the animals gather
They rasp like crickets and seem to be speaking
All the world is in truth enormous
A giant who fondles his children

Bells of crystal are ringing far away
Tomorrow, tomorrow they say: the Easter of the Heavens!

XIII

Bells of crystal are ringing far away —

They tell of him who was burned in life
Like the honeybee in the upsurge of wild thyme;
Of the dawn who drowned on earthen breasts
Though she was announcing a brilliant day;
Of the snowflakes that flashed in the brain and vanished
Just when the whistling of bullets was heard far away
And the Albanian partridge flew high in lamentation!

They tell of him who never came close to crying
Of the deep longing he had for the Love of life
When the wind gathered in strength far away
And birds crowed on the beams of the ruined mill,
Of the women who drank the wild music

Standing erect by the window squeezing their handkerchiefs
— And the lowering clouds drowned the tearful breasts —
Of the women who made desperation despair
Waiting for a black sign in the front of the field
And then heavy hoofbeats beyond the threshold,
They tell of his warm and uncaressed head
Of his large eyes where life fitted in
So deeply that it may never get out ever again.

XIV

Now the dream in the blood beats more quickly
The truest moment of the world rings out:
Liberty,
The Greeks show the way in the darkness:
L I B E R T Y
For you the eyes of the sun shall fill with tears of joy.

Rainbow-beaten shores fall into the water
Ships with open sails voyage on the meadows
The most innocent girls
Run naked in men's eyes
And modesty shouts from behind the hedge
Boys! there is no other earth more beautiful . . .
The truest moment of the world rings out!

With a morning stride on the growing grasses
He is continually ascending
Now, round about him shine those passions which at one time
Were lost in the solitude of sin;
The passions flame up, neighbors of his heart;
Birds greet him, they seem to him his younger brothers
Men hail him, they seem to him his companions
"Birds my dear birds, this is where death ends!"
"Comrades my dear comrades, this is where life begins!"
The dew of heavenly beauty glistens in his hair

Bells of crystal are ringing far away
Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow: the Easter of God!

KIMON FRIAR:

Odysseus Elytis

A poet may be significant not only as a writer of good poems but also as one who gives conscious expression to a new spirit by being the mirror of a sensibility still diffuse and latent in the world about him. Elytis is significant to Greece from this point of view. Born in Heracleion, Crete, in 1912, he has spent his entire life (save for three recent years in France) in Athens and in travel throughout the Greek mainland and the Aegean islands. At the University of Athens he studied law and political science, but was primarily interested in poetry. The first poems he published — in 1935 in *New Letters,* the leading magazine for serious writers — and the work of George Seferis mark a turning-point in contemporary Greek poetry. Elytis's appearance on the Greek literary scene marked the insistence of a new poetic style employing unrhymed verse, free verse rhythms, the surrealist image, and a general structure based not on logic but on sentiment. He also introduced two basic attitudes of the new sensibility which had a profound influence on other writers. One was a turn toward nature, toward awareness of the seaside, of summer, of the hot midday sun of Greece. The other was a turn from the poetry of the damned *(poésie maudite)* to that of joy, from the acuteness of pathos to the creation of a happy beauty. The trend of French poetry from Nerval and Baudelaire through the surrealists had been tremendously influential on several generations of Greek poets, who had become separated from the spirit of their own country and their own demotic traditions, had locked themselves in ivory towers or roamed in an alien nature full of parks, rain, and swans where they cultivated their neuroses, the excitation of the senses, and the praise of evil. But Elytis directed himself to the substantial worth of life. He sings of kindness — not the kindness of the Christian who turns the other cheek, but that embattling kindness which carries a sword in hand.

Elytis's first book, *Orientations,* appeared in 1940; his second, *Sun the First,* in 1943. When the Italians first attacked Greece in the fall of 1940, he served as a reserve lieutenant and took part in the battles along the Albanian front until he became ill from typhus and was sent to Athens during its German Occupation. During the joint Occupation he wrote his *Heroic and Elegiac Song for the Lost Second Lieu-*

tenant of the Albanian Campaign, surely one of the most moving war elegies of modern times, in which evil is metamorphosed into good through joy and transfiguration. It was first published in the periodical *Notebook,* Athens, August-September 1945, and has since been published in book form in Italian translation in Rome, and in a French translation in Paris. Recently, after finishing my translation into English — the first rough draft had been made, with the poet's active collaboration, in various taverns and hotel cafes in Athens —, I asked Elytis to send me some account of its background and inspiration. He responded with the two letters which follow, the first of more general import, the second dealing with the particular experience from which the poem was born.

Two Letters from Odysseus Elytis

It so happens that I am not only symptomatically but, even more so, organically a Greek. I mean, from the point of view that I myself live in an unalterable Homeric landscape and that I contain Plato in my blood. For this reason I condemned for myself from early youth the entire expressional form which the Renaissance has represented for Western Culture. I was drawn by that which my forefathers had correctly begun, which the peoples of the Mediterranean had latently preserved, and which in our day has again been given worth by a few revolutionary minds in an aging Europe. I sought with them new foundations for such notions as objectivity, myth-making, and synthesis.

Particularly in poetry I wished to pass from psychological observation and the singularity of personal expression — or, if necessary, along with these — to the impersonal state of a different beauty which might correspond to the beauty of our epoch. I was helped in this no longer by ancient myth but by a study of its inner mechanism, and also by the known fact that I lived amid a people who still continue to assimilate with greatest ease natural landscape and spiritual modes.

But from another point of view my Columbus Egg has been my resistance to the general slogan that "we must present the drama and agony of our times." When reality manages to surpass the imagination in boldness, then poetic exaggeration is useless, and the affectation of pain becomes a mere coarsening of blood and tears. On the contrary, I think the poet must find those spiritual powers which may counterbalance this drama and this agony. He must aim at such resynthesis of the fragments of reality that he may pass "what is" to

reach "what may be," aiming always at a model of clarity which has no relation whatsoever to the purism of former schools of poetry and painting in the period between the wars.

In the development of my poem on the *Second Lieutenant* some critics have sought to find the sequence of movements in a symphony, and a stage director has mounted it in agreement with the analogies and progressions of Passion Week climaxing in the Resurrection. The truth is that I was indeed much concerned with the architectonics of the poem as well as with the fusion of Platonic and Christian ideas up to a certain point — something extremely difficult for me since I did not wish to reach that point unless through the majestic road of feeling or intuition. I do not know if I have succeeded. But from another point of view, the element of Freedom that "is incessantly born with lightnings" gave me the facility to place myself in the center of the preoccupations of our time, and simultaneously to unite myself with the few scenes and figures of our mythological and historical tradition. As for the place of the poem in the body of my work — I believe that the *Second Lieutenant* is no more than the coming of age of "the boy with the skinned knee" of my early poetry — the free, unfettered type of man who accords with the future, with that exact future which our tragic age dreams of and forges with painful toil.

"How do you write?" the poet is often asked in interview. And he hastens to answer, "I do not know." In truth, from one point of view, I also do not know. But from another point of view I communicate upwards and downwards, in the same manner in which Heracleitus meant these two ways to be "one and the same." My metaphysics is *physics;* for me the other world is lived and played within this one. I believe in the restitution of justice which I identify with light. And together with a glorious and ancient ancestor of mine, I am proud to say, in spite of the fashion of my time, that "I do not care for those Gods whose worship is practiced in the dark." (Athens, March, 1954.)

II

The shouts of Athenian citizens milling about the streets, unfurling flags and brandishing placards, had not yet ceased when, in a small room of Army Headquarters, I was informed that I was immediately to serve, with the rank of Second Lieutenant, in command of the First Army Corps. A Major and I, the next morning, were the first to unseal the secret order for General Mobilization. I was impressed with what exactness everything had been foreseen, and how

systematically, within a few hours, everything was put into action. This cold-blooded mechanization, I thought, would kill poetry in me once and for all. But in a few days, when the order came to advance toward the front, poetry was once again to rise, but this time from action.

Now on foot with a crooked stick and slow measured pace, now riding a tall horse, I climbed at night among the huge black trees and terrifying steeps of the Pindus range. Always at night. This was the best time for thought. During the day we had to contend with various orders, the coming and going, the air precautions, the responsibilities. At night, the advance in the dark, and a time for thought. It seemed to me scandalous that, confronted by such sudden suffering and the dark unknown future both of my country and my personal fate, I should at all be disposed to think in poetic terms. But the sudden contrary turn given my habitual life began slowly to take on before my eyes the symbolic significance of those contraries which a poet undertakes, when he functions truly, in order to reach the one identical desired goal. Through the way up and the way down of Heracleitus, it was necessary for me to proceed toward that spear-point where life and death, light and darkness ceased to be contraries. Surrealism, from which I had once begun, had proclaimed the same thing to me through the mouth of André Breton. The mystical Greek tradition had again brought it to my ear through the mouth of Anghelos Sikelianos. Fear, the physical fear of war, the material fear of bombs and shells, annihilated within me all aspects of false literature, and left naked the meaning of a true need for poetry. Fear was in turn annihilated in me by the salvation brought me, as a man, by a poetry made of nakedness and truth.

Many times the mists which rose from the chasms, enfolding me and soaking me to the bone, seemed not at all like an accustomed natural phenomenon but like a "physical manifestation" of the Voice emanating from our earth, a voice whose features I recognized and which made me ashamed of the many times when I, together with other young men of the same age, had ironically mocked it. No, this point of view was not an easy patriotism, but the conscience of the destiny of a country which has continually confronted the forces of violence, from the time of the Persian Wars to this day, with exactly the same analogies and the same meaning.

A kind of "metaphysical modesty" dominated me. I had been deeply moved to recreate not only Helen and Achilles and Adonis out of many island girls and fisherlads and shepherds, but also fighters,

both men and women, of our nation. This is why I did not hesitate — as another European poet might — to praise the hero of a contemporary war. The virtues which I found embodied and living in my comrades formed in synthesis a brave young man of heroic stature, one whom I saw in every period of our history. They had killed him a thousand times, and a thousand times had he sprung up again breathing and alive. His was no doubt the measure and worth of our civilization, compounded of his love not of death but of life. It was with his love of Freedom that he recreated life out of the stuff of death. Besides, as a poet, I saw in the daring conduct of our people in the Albanian War not only the vitality of our race but also the vitality of *beautiful madness* over prudence and calculation.

Later, with an order in my pocket, I set out to meet my new army unit at the front somewhere between the Akrokeravnia Mountains and Tepeleni. One by one I abandoned the implements of material existence. The lice swarmed and multiplied. Mud and rain disfigured my uniform. Snow covered everything in sight. And when the time came for me to take the final leap in understanding what role I was to play in terms of the enemy, I was no longer anything but a creature of slight substance who — exactly because of this — carried within him all the values of material life stressed to their breaking point and conducted to their spiritual analogy. Was this a kind of "contemporary idealism"? That very night it became necessary for me to proceed on a narrow path where I met repeatedly with stretcher-bearers who with great difficulty tried to keep in balance the heavily wounded whom they were bearing to the rear. I shall never forget the groans of those wounded. They made me, in the general over-excitement of my mind, conjure up that "it is not possible," that "it cannot otherwise be done" which is the reversion of justice on this earth of ours. They made me swear an oath in the name of the Resurrection of that brave Hellenic Hero, who had become for me now the Second Lieutenant of the Albanian Campaign, that I might advance into battle with this talisman of my lyrical idea. After that I could think of nothing. I lived through a series of savage days and nights filled with snows, shrapnel, machine-gun fire, and replacements to fill up the losses of our battalion which was now bearing the brunt of the big battle of Bolena.

I had come out victorious in the first phase of my battle with Death. But a second, a more deceitful phase followed when I was struck by that dread disease, typhus. I found myself in a hospital in Jannina, condemned to lie motionless, fed a few spoonfuls of milk a day, a pack of ice on my stomach. Fever consumed me. Whenever the bombard-

ment became intense, all scurried into the shelters, leaving me where I was with but the window beside me open to prevent the shattering glass from falling upon me. But I was stubbornly determined — as though this depended on me — not to die. The more the miracle of life persisted, the more I believed this was because of the poetic need I had eventually to realize and embody my lyrical idea. When a priest came to give me final communion, I drove him away. And I resisted in every way when the nurses tried to transfer me to the room where the dying were kept. Motionless, with my eyes fixed on the ceiling, my teeth clenched, I passed through the final crisis. At that moment the news came that the Germans were descending upon us and that the hospitals were to be evacuated. I was thrust into a freight truck which, on its journey, was constantly fired on by Stukas, and after three days I was deposited somewhere in the suburbs of Athens. Stumbling and dragging myself along, I finally reached my home. I was saved. I had justified my idea, and nothing further remained for me but to fulfill my vow, to give form to the Second Lieutenant of the Albanian Campaign on multiple levels woven together with the traditions of Greek history, but also involved — in particular — within and beyond Death, in the Resurrection, the Easter of God. (Athens, May, 1954.)

G. A. BENDER:

Eudaemonia

Lovelier than landscapes our world:
The private Sunday beaches of delight
Behind late sun reflecting window panes,
The summer meadows which surmount the plates
Laid on the table. And when dusk hangs white
Between the trees and on the yards, streets swirl,
Both places or conditions merge. The slight
Veneer of visibles prepares with blur
To fade, which your return will consummate.

EDWIN HONIG:

A Beauty That Rages

Herring face, dead beat, old dago,
Are you high and not kicked out yet?
Maybe they'll bring you some chowder today.
Is it your wormy old dog under
The cot or the log dreamt up just
For your son, to bash the curly head's brains in?
How many soft-nosed tourists today
Did you snag with yellowy cucumbers, two
For a quarter, also that song about Naples,
Your vineyard, running with girls in high season?

"Sixty-eight year I been here and nobody
Know me from Adam. I go home to my dad now —
He's hundred and three, artist on gravestone
And chimney places. He ugly like Christ —
Next him even my pooch is a beaut.
But a MAN, bet your boots he's A MAN. He open
More melons than you eat the beans. And all
Of em's ripe — you get me, you sucker?"

And the town still bickering whether to jail you
Or ship you the hell off the island tomorrow
Or wait until winter when maybe you're dead.
You sure got your rights — shoot, let everyone
Know it, snug in that shack, truck garden
Dizzy with flowers, squatting tax-free
Smack in the middle of no-man's swampland.
"Maybe nobody buy it for two hundred dollars,
So I sink it for fifty, you tell em, hey?
Please keep the change. Beauty is dead
In this country. Milky face people,
Not one of em's seen even a saint! Husband
Drink beer in the woods, afraid of the wife.

She jumping in bed with the grocery boy.
He's quick, got the tips and a salary,
Know the business all right before he fifteen.
She lose some of the vinegar there but she get
A big pie, maybe some cream, for free.
All people is decent on Sunday, they sleep.
Rest of the week they say Hi, running
You down like turkey turd under the feet.
No crumbs in the parlor but rats in the head.
Nobody steal and nobody murder,
But why every year somebody hang
Or somebody drown himself dead?
Say, what kind of people is that?"

Island New England, oldest America,
Famed for your scruples and steeples and cider,
Your whiteness, inbredness, intolerable silence —
Don't ship him off, this runt of a dago,
But share him and feed him in aging
For raging square on you. Your daughters are sullen,
Absently raped; your sons swagger in hip boots,
Green with the sickness to drink themselves free
In the cell of a boat or absently drown
In the swells. Europe the vineyard is dying
With curses upon you. Be true to this dago
Who rages. He has found you but far from entire.
Share him and feed him, part of your riches and wages,
A beauty that knows you, and rages and rages.

MARY DEWEES FOWLER:

'Man of Distinction'

Father Witherby looked handsome when he had on his good suit, walked with dignity and carried a cane, but sitting in the lumpy overstuffed chair in his small room he was like any old man. If he thought there was a draft he would wear his flat-looking cap, and this did not enhance his appearance. He had the feeling that his daughter Margaret had given him the coldest room in her apartment. Sometimes he muffled himself up in a tartan scarf left over from better days. The fine old furniture in his room was left over from better days, too. When Margaret said he could have a different room he wouldn't change, and she knew why. He liked the location — exactly halfway down the long hall, where he could keep track of all that went on and not be left out of things. He refused to shut his door, and darted a keen look at anyone who passed. Margaret did not like this, and he knew it. But he didn't care.

His wife Mimi was dead and he was old and money was running out. He was in no position to refuse Margaret's invitation to come live with her and her daughter in their apartment on Webster Street in San Francisco, so he finally accepted. He would have preferred living in the home of his son, John W. Junior, across the Bay in Sausalito, rather than with a couple of business women. John W. had more money than Margaret. But he had three babies, aged two, four and five, also a wife. At Margaret's there was no head of the house since she had divorced that artist chap of hers. Father decided that he would fit in better in a place where he was needed. He could always spend Sunday in Sausalito if he wanted to. It made a nice little trip. He enjoyed dressing up and crossing the Bay, getting met at the Sausalito station and being the guest of honour at one of Geraldine's fine dinners. John's wife was a good cook all right.

Today was Thursday, and he had already begun to think about whether to go this Sunday or not. There was something happening in the house here. He couldn't quite make out what. A continual going and coming past his door. This Madolyn Ross, some friend of Margaret's, seemed to be staying on indefinitely. If he'd realized the apartment was going to be crowded with guests all the time he might

have lived with John in spite of the three children. This Madolyn had just drifted in — apparently someone Margaret had picked up in the business world. One of those quick friendships. It seemed to him as if Margaret had been on a kind of wild binge ever since Madolyn had moved into this apartment. (Her nickname was "Mad." Most appropriate.) She was not the kind that Witherbys had ever associated with. In the old days people knew who other people *were* before they invited them into their homes.

Margaret walked down the hall, paused at his door and said, "Are you going over to John's this week, Father?"

Using his shoulders, he turned his whole body toward her.

"Haven't decided. Depends on the weather."

He'd decide when he was good and ready. They seemed overly anxious to promote this trip of his. He searched her face intently as she stood in the doorway smoking a cigarette. "Why do you want to know?"

She shrugged. "I was just asking, that's all." Then she added, "So I'll know how to order."

Father snorted.

"Then you'd better speak to the weather man." His blue eyes stared at her defiantly.

He could hear Madolyn in the living room saying, "Such a darling old character came in Jane's office yesterday. He was *precious*. He doesn't need any more help, he says, because he's going to *carve toys* and sell them."

Then the voice of Louise, calling "Mother, come here. We're trying to decide on this chair."

Apparently they were still busy with their interior decorating, fixing the flat up modern style. When Margaret went in answer to Louise's call Father shuffled into the kitchen and heated some milk and carried it back to his room. He always felt less depressed if his stomach was at peace.

"Let's take this wonderful canary yellow. Let's not have anything dull or somber in the whole flat!"

He knew what the living room would eventually look like.

With bull-dog tenacity Margaret had refused to put Father's furniture in her flat. "It isn't the way I want it to be for Lou*ise,*" she protested. "I want everything to be cheerful from now on."

Good-looking solid mahogany furniture left packed up in a storeroom. In this setting what kind of a girl would Louise turn out to be?

Queer that Margaret couldn't see what an advantage a family background would be for Louise — even an old-fashioned background — with all the stability and prestige it represented. But no. Fuzzy white rugs, tables so low you had to bend double to lift a book off them, no curtains, drapes with a gaudy design of tropical leaves and flowers that might just as well have been monkeys, and chairs — well — to him they looked like canvas bags to throw trash into. Margaret had put his own easy chair in a corner, with a lamp — but what a lamp. Flexible. Each time he finished reading he left it twisted into some ridiculous shape. "Darn fine lamp," he would say. "Functional."

This visiting woman friend, Madolyn — Father was afraid that Margaret was getting to be pretty suggestible. All her ideas were coming from Madolyn. But Margaret always had been flighty. More McNeil in her than Witherby. Probably why she married that artist, come to think of it. If he had been listened to — But at that time Margaret's mother had been living, and he had taken a back seat and let them find out for themselves.

Evidently they *were* planning something for Sunday, because Margaret said, "Don't you think wine would be nice, Mad?"

"Wait till we get the rest of it planned, honey."

Honey.

"Where's Grandfather?"

Ah, so they were going to have wine.

"Where would he be but in his room?" Margaret meant that she knew he was listening.

Of course after that there was nothing to do but join them. He wasn't an eavesdropper. (Except that one time that had been a sort of accident, when he happened to hear Madolyn saying behind a closed door "You've just never stood up to him — not once in your whole life, I bet.") Well, that was that. Just as well he had heard. Better to know where you stand.

"Louise, are you sure you like this color scheme and won't tell me later that you didn't have any say in it? You know how you are."

"Mother, do you think I'm getting fat? I ought to go on my diet again. I'll start next Monday."

Good girl, Louise. Don't let your mother trap you with her tricky questions. Father walked over to his easy chair and started to sit in it.

"No, don't sit there," Louise said, gesturing simultaneously with both hands. "Wait, Grandfather. We're trying to decide whether to upholster that in wine. You help us. The rest of the room is yellow

and different shades of green, and white, and of course blond wood."

Blond wood.

One thing about Louise, she treated him as if he were a human being. If only he had more influence around here he could swing her away from all this. There was something about her slim figure and her gentle manners that you could take pride in.

"Do you think wine would be a good color, Grandfather?"

Ah. Louise was trying to sidetrack him, save his feelings, divert his attention. . . .

"I've always thought very highly of a good wine — nothing better than a decent Rhine wine — Riesling, Moselle — or a Burgundy. Depends on what you're eating with it," he said, settling himself in the chair as if no one had asked him not to, and clearing his throat as he opened the newspaper he had brought with him. He peeked around the edge of the paper and gave Louise a knowing look, his eyes large behind his glasses.

"Your grandfather is pulling your leg, dear," said Madolyn.

He cleared his throat again, loudly, and stayed behind the newspaper. He was sick of her dazzling smile. This was what he had come to. A strange young woman called "Mad" could say things *of* him instead of *to* him. Forty years ago she hadn't been born, and he had been the president of a shipping company. People were trying to put him on the shelf, he knew that. He'd be darned if he'd let them do it. He intended to live out his life with dignity. They and their jobs and their high salaries and new-fangled political theories, their hobnobbing with what they called the workers.

All three of these women belonged to clubs of do-gooders — his own daughter to the Business and Professional Women, Madolyn to some kind of a Social Services group and even Louise to the United Office Workers or whatever it was named. In the last three weeks since Madolyn Ross had been staying with Margaret you would think the flat was an international club. Hawaiians sitting in the living room one day, big greasy-haired men. Madolyn had told him they were discussing the music union. Once a Chinese woman came and talked for a long time. A very good way for Margaret to lose the respect of the neighbors, besides being downright foolishness in the first place. Keep this sort of thing downtown. One needn't make *friends* of these people. Help them if you can — and if they need it. "When you going to give a tea for the International Longshoremen?" he had asked.

He moved restlessly in his chair now, making unnecessary noise when he turned the pages of the newspaper. Ten cents used to mean something to him at their age, and here these women were using *wallets* for their folding money, stepping into taxis at the drop of a hat, and acting so important you'd think they were running San Francisco.

I wonder when they'll start considering me an object of charity. As soon as my good clothes wear out and my last bond is cashed, I guess. Who knows how soon that will be? I'm going to keep my membership in the Union League Club if I spend my last ten-dollar bill on it. At least I'll get a good funeral notice. Not much comfort. A few old business men riding along behind the hearse in hired limousines. Old Charlie Jenkins and Hugh Evans . . . (He couldn't think of anybody else.)

Well — (he accepted a glass of limeade with a touch of gin in it that Margaret proffered him) let's get my mind off the subject of being put away. I'm lucky to have a son and daughter. In Margaret's mature face he could see traces of the little girl she had been on the day he had walked along with her up to the schoolyard gate — the day John W. Junior was being born in the St. Francis Hospital. He'd never forget the time John Junior had the mumps. He'd filled the boy's pig-bank with five-dollar gold pieces, and when John W. opened it he just about died . . .

Madolyn was smiling at him. What now? Better get ready to parry. He took a cigarette from the box on the table at his side and fitted it into a short holder. He couldn't seem to get more than two puffs on a cigarette if it wasn't in a holder. He said, "I could tell you how to fix up this place. Mimi and I used to have one of the finest living rooms in San Francisco. We chose expensive wallpaper — brown and gold it was, the very best — and then we bought good mahogany furniture." There was a short pause. "We thought the world and all of that furniture," he added.

"Vouz avez parfaitement raison . . . gran'père," Madolyn said. "But you know how women are these days."

French.

"When are we going to have dinner, Margaret?" he asked fretfully. "These long drinks take away my appetite. Guess I better not drink it." Although he had already taken two swallows he held the glass out for her to take away.

"Well, put it on the sidetable, for goodness sake," she said, not moving from her chair.

Three days later, Father rose at nine o'clock and spent an hour in his small lavatory, shaving. He stretched the skin of his face with one hand, and shaved with an old-fashioned razor. It was a beautiful April day. Nobody had asked him again about his plans for Sunday. He decided to go ahead with his trip to Sausalito. It was a pleasure to sit after a mid-day dinner on the glassed-in porch of John's house and enjoy the view of San Francisco Bay. Geraldine was a good-natured woman, and she was raising a fine family for John. They were noisy children, not very well trained, but they were a handsome lot, all boys.

With his military hairbrushes Father vigorously brushed his thick white hair. He knew he was distinguished-looking and took pride in it. His fingers were swollen around the joints, but he stood very straight in his tailormade suit and carried an impressive cane. If you kept up an appearance, people gave you some respect — not much, but some. He saw in the mirror that his skin was pink from the astringent he used, and his hair shining with cleanliness. He had grown stouter these last years. Too stout. He had seen men in the club get apoplectic. None of that for him. He wasn't going to let himself get a bit stouter than he already was. He knew that sometimes he spoke loudly and let his face get red. When the occasion warranted. But he hadn't done that for a long time. You couldn't live the good life for so many years and not have to pay for it. Nowadays he was very careful of his health.

"I'm going over to John's for Sunday dinner," he said at breakfast. "I think I forgot to mention it."

"I thought you would if it was a nice day," Margaret said evenly.

He walked out of the house with no goodbyes, stood for a moment at the edge of the sidewalk looking up and down the street as if expecting somebody or something, then went on down to the corner. He had to pass the Congregational church in the middle of the second block, and the doors were still open for latecomers, though the organ was pealing. Father walked past noncommittally. He didn't belong. Never had belonged. Somehow, there had always been plenty to do without *that*. While he waited for the Sausalito bus, he mused on the advantages of being a member of that large, rather noisy church, where so many activities seemed to go on. You had to be geared to

that sort of thing. Mimi hadn't been. Neither had he. Though he'd been to church plenty in Indiana as a boy. But back there — that was real. He stopped these thoughts as the bus drew up, belching and snorting.

The bus whizzed across Golden Gate bridge to Sausalito. Even when he'd had his own home, he and Mimi used to come over here for Sunday dinner. He seized the opportunity to tell his seat companion, a young, well-dressed man, about his past life, and to explain why he wasn't in his own car. "Who wants to drive a car over this bridge with all these Sunday drivers? Only a fool would do it."

Will John meet me? he wondered.

Geraldine did, with two children in the back seat and the baby in front. John was playing golf somewhere. Father was glad he didn't have to trundle up the hill road in a taxi.

"I just *thought* you might possibly be on that bus, Father Witherby! How are you? I came down to buy some ice cream."

"John'll be home for dinner, won't he?"

"No — he won't, Father. Isn't that too bad. He's in this golf tournament, and afterwards they're having some kind of a doings."

"I said I'd be back early," he remarked, getting in the front seat and settling little Ralphie on his lap.

"*Watch* it!" he said, as Geraldine went swirling around the steep bends in the road.

The two children in the back seat were so quiet that he turned to look at them, and found them blowing bubble-gum.

Later, when Geraldine was putting dinner on the table and John and George started wrangling over a fire-engine she spoke to them sternly. Father noticed that they paid no attention. "You ought to make these children obey you, Geraldine. They'll get out of hand," he warned. Their noise, squeaks and shrieks were making him nervous. Too bad John Junior wasn't home to control them.

John Junior, now, knew what he was doing. He was a smart business man, and this property was going up in value. It was only half an acre, but the marine view would always be unobstructed, and they had added on to the house year by year until it was quite an establishment. The country was the place to bring up boys, and commuting to San Francisco was simple. Father felt a great surge of pride in his son. He wiped his forehead with a fine lawn handkerchief smelling of bay rum. "John's done a lot of work in the garden, I see," he commented.

"Wrong, Father Witherby. Give me the credit for that. I did it with my own little hands."

He looked squintingly at the Bay, where a boat race was being held. "When's John going to get himself a sailboat?"

Geraldine gave a weary sigh. "You know perfectly well, Father, we can't afford a sailboat."

"It would be good for these boys as they grow up to learn something about water."

After dinner they sat on the porch. George yelled with excitement and came from the garden dangling a garter snake between two fingers. He began to scare his mother with it, making as if he was going to throw it in her face. Father grasped his little wrist firmly and gave it a quick jerk. The snake went over the porch railing. "Enough of that, young man." George stared at him with indignation.

Time to be getting home, Father thought. Before the busses get crowded. He bent down and patted the sleeping Ralphie's soft cheek. "I think I'll be going along now," he said to Geraldine. She stood up at once and said she would drive him down the hill. "I'll just be a few minutes," she said to the boys. "Watch Ralphie."

She was careful this time, and didn't drive nearly so fast as before. "I guess we're a pretty strenuous family, aren't we?" she said, as the car came alongside the station platform.

"They're a fine bunch of boys. I'm mighty proud of my grandsons, don't make any mistake about it."

She smiled.

"My years are beginning to tell on me. Can't buck things the way I used to."

"Just the same, you're wonderful for your age, Father Witherby," she said, opening the car door for him.

In the bus he admitted to himself that he felt very lonely. Time flows along. Customs change. I'm out of it. Here I am, sitting in this bus . . . and who cares?

The salt air came through the open windows mixed with exhaust fumes. Father was the only one sitting alone, so he talked to himself . . . most everybody I used to know has departed for the next world. Who knows what the next year will do to me. I want to get along better with my grandsons. I'll bring them each some small present when I make my next visit. He brushed a few specks from the sleeve of his coat and finished the trip in a morose silence. From now on he was going to relax and take things easier. He couldn't manage the

world. Things were different from the way they used to be and that's all there was to it.

He stopped in at a restaurant on the San Francisco side and had a cup of hot clam juice, sitting at a table with a window that looked over the water. He was afraid to go home too early because they might think he hadn't had a good time at John's. He sniffed the fish smells and low tide, and watched the people for a while. Particularly a gentle old lady and her husband having a cheap shore dinner at the table next to him.

Fifty years ago he had roamed this waterfront, full of excitement and money-making plans, had spent hours in the various shipping offices and walking among the bales and boxes of the cargo sheds. He used to visit the City Pilot's office high up in one of the buildings — (old Cap'n Bill — he couldn't remember his other name — dead now) — and have a couple of whiskies-and-soda, maybe more than a couple. Now who was the City Pilot? He didn't even know. Or care.

Well, let's be practical and hoist these old bones into a bus again and get home where it's warm. Mustn't forget there's two women dying to wait on me hand and foot. If it wasn't for them I'd likely be living alone in a hotel till the end. If I'm a good boy, maybe they'll give me a nice polished granite monument. He left the restaurant.

The sky had a purplish tinge and there was no more sun. It would be good to get in the house again. Louise might be playing some of her records, and he hadn't read the Sunday paper yet. He began to wonder what kind of marriage Louise would make. Hope she'll do better than her mother did, but I doubt it. Already she is eating, thinking, talking her job. What kind of man will take that on? Well — I won't have a word to say. I won't be here. The bus was crowded and he had to stand. No one offered him a seat, and finally he made a joke with the bus-driver. "Haven't any of these people got *homes?*"

He cut the air with his cane as he walked up his own street. When he opened the door he heard voices, a man's among them. They must have friends visiting. There wasn't a thing he could do about it. All he could hope, with Madolyn the social worker in the house, was that the visitors weren't Hottentots. The sounds came from the dining room and he could smell roast lamb. He'd go in and see for himself, and get a serving of dessert, maybe a piece of cake. He stopped in his room, left his hat and cane on the bed and walked down the hall. He could see Louise sitting at the table, but the others were not visible. Then he stood in the doorway.

Glistening with excitement and pleasure, a young man almost as black as coal stood at the head of the table carving a leg of lamb. Father had to fight off a sense of unreality. He put up a hand as if to ward off a blow and then hid the gesture by stroking his upper lip as if the moustache of years ago was still there. Margaret rose from her chair. "Join our party, Father," she said. A funny feeling came over him. He allowed Margaret to propel him to the end of the table, where he sank into a chair. First his eyes focussed on the three women, one after the other, Margaret on his right and Louise and Madolyn on the left, and then he looked directly down the length of the table at the man, who had stopped carving and was standing with a polite waiting look on his face. He wore a yellow silk shirt with rather full sleeves ending in tight cuffs. Father automatically cleared his throat, but found nothing to say. Coming in from outside, he felt the heat in the room oppressive. A weakness, a little trembling that seemed to come from the pit of his stomach, began.

"Well, don't stand around and gape at me," he said harshly. "Open some windows."

"Nobody's standing around, Father," said Margaret. Madolyn and the dark visitor went to open a window.

"You might have waited dinner for me."

"Waited dinner!" said Margaret, off guard.

"Oh, that's right. You thought I wouldn't be here." His blue eyes stared at her.

Madolyn and the guest now stood next to his chair. "Mr. Witherby, I want to present our friend Diessy." Lively eyes flashed in the black face, a hollow showed in the cheek as he smiled. He bowed from the waist, and Father saw a gold-wire loop hanging from his ear. "I am very please to meet you, sir.'

To his annoyance Father felt his face get warm. Damn this high blood pressure. He pulled out the cigarette case Louise had given him for his birthday and extracted a cigarette. Diessy whipped out a lighter and clicked on the flame. After he had taken a puff Father said, "Take your seat again Mr. . . . a . . . don't let my sudden appearance interrupt . . . a . . . whatever is going on. I'm only a side show."

Margaret smiled a little sadly and said, "Go on carving, Diessy." Louise went to get a knife, fork and spoon for Father, and brought a napkin which he automatically unfolded and spread across his stomach. When Margaret poured a glass of water for him he drained it at

one gulp. Diessy tested the carving knife with his finger and flashed his eyes around the table.

"Nobody pay any attention to me," said Father. "I've had dinner." He gazed at the tight curls on Diessy's head. What was this, anyway. Had Margaret lost her mind? Her own father seated at the foot of the table and this — this — He put his hand on his water glass and Louise quickly refilled it. There was a bursting feeling in his head. *I'd like to throw this glass clean through the window.* Instead, he knocked it over. His face thickened, then slowly the brick color receded.

"Oh, Grandfather!" Louise started up and dabbed at the wet tablecloth with her napkin.

Madolyn began to smile.

"No harm done," said Margaret calmly, spreading a fresh napkin over the spot and laying the silver back neatly.

"No!" he said in a loud voice. "I said no dinner."

But come what might, he would not go away from this table. No sirree, he would stick it out. It was his business to stay. He noticed they were using his silver. All this for a kinky-haired — Pretty soon in this house you'd see anything happening, *any*thing. He coughed and pushed his chair back about an inch.

"Don't you have hunger, sir? I have made just right serving for you." Kinky-hair ladled a spoon of mint sauce over two thin slices of lamb and put a small mound of peas on the plate and half a roasted potato, which he slashed in four pieces with the carving knife and then covered with gravy. At the last, he picked up a sprig of parsley with the point of the carving knife and fork held together, and laid it meticulously on the meat. He carried the food to Father's side, holding the plate with a napkin.

"Please eat, Grandfather," Louise pleaded. He saw her flushed, woebegone face. She looked as if she had a fever, poor child. *By God —*

He began to push the food around on his plate.

"Diessy's a friend of ours who's been dropping in Jane's office," said Madolyn. "He's had the worst luck, haven't you, Diessy? He lost the address of the people he was asked to call on when he was in port and someone directed him to us. Tell about some of your adventures, please, Diessy."

"You wish me to? How many years you want me to go back?" Diessy's teeth were like a flash of lightning for a second and then all

was dark again. He buttered a roll. "First I remember was on a boat went to pieces and I hung on a log of wood in the water. Mediterranean. Second? I sat on shoulders of a man who ride bareback in the French circus, and he throw me to another man on horse. Back and forth. Back and forth." His teeth flashed once more, and he popped a piece of meat into his mouth.

Margaret and Louise laughed with appreciation. Diessy bowed slightly, and went on. Father ate nervously. His plate was nearly empty, and when Louise passed the rolls his hand closed over two of them at once.

"Later in that circus I ride bicycle on a tightrope. For two years." Diessy made the gesture of holding his hands away from handlebars and wriggled his body. Then he stood up, and grasping the carving knife, said, "But the best time was when I became in the French army for money." He indicated a knife three times as long as the carving knife, and curved.

Remembering his duties he touched the roast with the knife. "But now — shall I make some meat?"

Father's eyes, under his bushy eyebrows, roved restlessly around the table. "First," said Diessy, "I ask *you,* the head of the house."

"No," said Father, proceeding to light a cigarette. "I've had dinner." Madolyn took another helping and the dish of peas was passed. When Margaret passed it to Father he leaned back without touching it, and she had to stretch across the table to hand it to Louise. He cleared his throat. "Tell me, Mr. Deecee, what are you doing *now?"*

"Ah, sir. Taking it easy, maybe not so easy, on a ship."

"What do you do on this ship?"

Diessy raised his right shoulder toward his ear and held out one hand palm upward. "What have you on a ship? Swab deck, carry tray, wash dishes, push crates. Sometimes drink brandy with mate when he want a friend talking to him." He smiled at Father. "Luck is up and down. Once in Martinique I own Hispano."

"Diessy is Senegalese, Father Witherby," said Madolyn.

Since when had she started this 'Father Witherby'? That was the last straw. Father stirred his demi-tasse. With a bored sigh he said to Diessy, "You received your education in France?"

"In school all over world. Mostly school of life. But I been in a school some times. In Germany, France, Russia. I learn all three languages." He looked at Father for a minute and then winked. "But not enough of *any* — you think?" He shrugged. "My father

say I must be learned man. That is why I not go home — to Senegal. I rather my father think I am learned man, not dishwasher. Father like to be proud of son, *n'est-ce pas?* You have son you are proud of?"

"Yes," said Margaret suddenly. "He has John Junior. John Junior is not exactly a learned man, but —"

Madolyn interrupted.

"Diessy. Tell about your experiences in Turkey — the harem. And Russia. You never finished — remember? Father Witherby came in right in the middle of it." She poured herself another cup of coffee and lit a cigarette. She and Father crossed glances.

Diessy bowed. "I go from one to other thing. Too much jump around. Am taking all attention to me. That not good. First I want to say what I think when you come in this room, Mr. Wederby. I look up. There you are in doorway . . ." He looked at the doorway as if Father were still standing there. "I try to think in that minute what it remind me of. Do you know what?" He waited.

"What?" said Louise.

"There is American ad in the paper. A man hold glass in his hand. The man have fine look — rich. He know what is the good life, you can tell. He is handsome. He is white hair. I think he is in politics. Ad is about what is in glass — but always with the man."

The three women burst out laughing. Even Father laughed.

"I am not making a joke?" asked Diessy, looking worried.

"No — no. You're not making a joke," Madolyn assured him. Margaret made an effort to stop laughing, then began again helplessly. "There you are, Grandfather," said Louise proudly.

Diessy took a sip of coffee, his eyes darting around the white tablecloth. "Cognac?" he said. It was as if he were asking someone to pass the salt.

Father pushed his chair back from the table and crossed one leg over the other. He rolled his cigarette between thumb and forefinger slightly as he smoked, and his blue eyes stared at Diessy with an appraising look. Then he cleared his throat. "Go in the closet in my room, Margaret," he ordered, giving an imperative nod of his head in the direction of the hall, "and bring out that bottle of brandy you'll find there." For a moment Margaret sat still in her chair, her face hot. Then she rose and did as she was bid. Father scratched his head with one finger and raised his eyebrows innocently. "Guess I forgot to say please."

While she was away he opened the glass doors of the dining room

cupboard and brought two small glasses and a box of cigars to the table.

"Now Diessy, it's our turn," said Madolyn, leaning back, "Go on with your adventures."

Diessy was selecting a cigar. He lifted lustrous eyes full of appreciation to Father, saying, "These damn fine cigars, sir."

"You womenfolk won't mind if we smoke, will you?" said Father as Margaret came into the room with a tall bottle three quarters full.

"Look," Madolyn said to Father. "Aren't you going to give any of us brandy except Diessy?"

"Would you care for some?"

"If I may. How about you, Margaret?" Margaret didn't even answer. "Louise?" Louise gave a slight shake of her head.

Madolyn brought two more glasses to the table. "Come on, Margaret," she urged. "Get in the swim."

"If Mother won't, then I will," said Louise. "A tiny bit."

Diessy passed his glass back and forth under his nose and shut his eyes. "Life is good, *n'est-ce pas?*" Then he looked at Louise admiringly. "And in the company of such a Beautiful."

Madolyn relaxed in her chair, one arm over the back, a cigarette dangling in her fingers. "Diessy," she prodded.

He looked at Father as if he and Father had some kind of a secret understanding. "They beg a story," he explained. "I try to think of the right one for their ears. I have fear my stories are for after the ladies have leave table."

"Ladies don't leave the table any more, Diessy. Not in this country," said Madolyn. "Do they, Margaret?"

"Not in this house, they don't," Margaret answered. "We never *have,* and I don't think we ever *will.*"

"Comment?" Diessy looked puzzled.

Father propped his elbow on the table and puffed comfortably on his cigar. "She means that in this country, Mr. Deecee, there is not much difference between women and men. Women are not like they used to be. They are fighting for their rights, and one of their rights is to be like a man."

"I see." Diessy nodded. "Custom is changing."

"Exactly," said Madolyn. "The difference here is between the generations, not between sexes."

"Ah, yes! That has always been. Between older and younger. Respect for older." He raised his brandy glass in a silent toast to

Father. "I am glad that America is keeping tradition. In spite of changing other ways."

Father refilled their glasses. He concentrated on keeping his hands from shaking. Easy does it, he said to himself. Louise put her hand over her glass but Madolyn did not. Father remained standing.

"To the ladies!" he said.

Diessy jumped to his feet.

When he sat down again he relit his cigar which had gone out. "Everywhere it is the same," he said in an easy conversational tone. "It is the ladies who make the inspiration. Bring the excitement to the living. Different in each country — yet the same. In Turkey, the harem . . ." He bowed toward Madolyn to show that he was acceding to her request at last. "Couches and silk — silk — Perfume of rose. Many *bon-bon,* sweet coffee, *ver*-y thick." He held two fingers to measure the small amount one would drink. "These ladies fat. Round white arms, like pillows." He put his hand up to his forehead apologetically. "So many ladies all at once — they go to the head."

Father's eyes lighted up with interest. He gave Diessy his undivided attention. So did the others.

"In Russia it was opposite." Diessy glanced around the table at his audience. "Big women. Beautiful in *strong* way. I see in army. The women stand up straight in uniform." He sat up straighter himself, then pushed back his chair and stood. He ran his hands down over his torso, held his stomach in and stood with his arms hanging down but not touching his sides. "You know how these women do?" He paused, as if to give someone a chance to answer. "No? They take their left breast — *so* — and throw around under left arm. Then right breast — *so* — and throw under right arm." He held his arms tight to his sides. "Then take piece of cloth, wind around to keep flat. That way they protect, and *also* have fine figure of soldier." He looked around triumphantly.

Father slapped his leg and guffawed, rocking back and forth, with a red face.

"No, really?" said Margaret.

Diessy walked over to the side of the dining room. He had on black trousers with metal bicycle clips holding them close around his ankles. "In Russia I drink the vodka until nobody is under the table. After four glasses you do this to see if all right." He squatted, folded his arms under his chin and did the familiar Russian dance.

"Bravo!" said Father. "What did you do in France?"

"Ah! Do everything in France!" Diessy pinched his lips together with three fingers, then threw a kiss to the ceiling, rolling his eyes.

Father walked away from the table and struck a pose. He too threw a kiss toward the ceiling and began to sing, in the fashion of Chevalier,

Ev'ry little breeze
Seems to whisper 'Louise,'
Birds in the trees
Sing 'I love you Louise.'

Madolyn got up and placed a hand on Diessy's shoulder. "I will see you tomorrow in Jane's office," she said. "We have a map of the city we want to give you." They walked together into the hall.

"Remember that song?" said Father, following them. He felt Margaret's touch on his arm and shook it off. Diessy turned around at the head of the stairs and bowed. "I am say goodby," he said. "For long time I will have this memory to thank you with. I now go to my bicycle. It is waiting. For a fine roast lamb I thank you every one of you."

"I'll walk downstairs with you," said Father. "I want to see that bicycle."

"That's the spirit, Father Witherby," said Madolyn. "Goodby, Diessy."

When Father stepped outside the front door he gave a bracing motion with his left leg, the way one does in stepping from a cabin onto a rolling deck. He quickly recovered himself and began to examine Diessy's bicycle which was leaning against the side of the house. "Is this the circus bicycle?" he asked with great interest.

"No, sir. The circus bicycle is not right bicycle for streets. This is just any bicycle. Take it on ship — wherever."

"Is that so?"

"It is better to have bicycle. For man of my color." Diessy bent over and put a key in the padlock on the front wheel. "I go anywheres more easy," he explained. Then he laughed. "But for the San Francisco hills not so good. It is not resting me. I am resting *it,* most time." He put his foot on the pedal. "I am glad I meet you, sir. It is my philosophy the father is important. It is the father that makes respectable the whole family. I do not have father."

There was silence. The two men looked at each other. Diessy nudged the pedal and it spun and made a small whirring noise. "I

only *say,* so people have respectable opinion of me. Me, I am orphan." Then after a pause he said, "You have money to lend me, sir?"

Father stared, and then said, "No, Mr. Deecee. I never lend money to anybody. That is my philosophy." He leaned forward so he could look right into Diessy's face. "Luck is down, eh?"

Diessy shrugged. *"Eh bien."* He straddled the bicycle and sat on the seat, balancing himself with one toe on the ground. He looked straight ahead, expressionless, for a moment, then rode off down the street, the back of his yellow shirt billowing out in the wind.

When Father came upstairs the three women were washing dishes. He carried an ash tray into the kitchen. Louise was perched on a stool, polishing glasses, Margaret had her hands in the dishwater, and Madolyn was scraping food off the plates into a white enameled garbage can.

"Wasn't he interesting, Grandfather?" said Louise nervously.

"Comment?" Father raised his shaggy eyebrows high. He placed the ash tray filled with cigar ashes on the sink among the dishes, for someone to take care of.

Madolyn raised up, her face pink from bending over the garbage can, and Margaret stopped clattering the dishes and closed her eyes in exasperation.

Father cleared his throat. "He said I was the one who made the womenfolk in this house respectable."

Margaret whirled around and leaned against the sink, resting on her elbows. Her hands dripped water on the floor.

"Re*spec*table! *Well — !"*

Louise widened her eyes. "For goodness sake, don't throw a *fit,* Mother — please."

Father backed away, his right shoulder raised and one hand held palm upward. There was a barely perceptible gleam of triumph in his blue eyes. As he backed through the kitchen door into the hall he had a bit of trouble getting his feet over the lintel and glanced down at it. *"Pardonnez moi,"* he said, then turned and went to his own room and closed the door softly behind him.

EDWIN FUSSELL:

Hemingway and Mark Twain

For the literary historian the best link between Mark Twain and Hemingway is in the paradox that, while both are stylistic craftsmen and innovators of the first importance, they also spend a surprising amount of time dissociating themselves from anything "literary." To connect the two writers in terms of style alone has often been a standard procedure, but it is not a safe one, for it excludes one side of the paradox; Hemingway's admiration for Mark Twain, seen from so limiting an aperture, will always seem excessive and bewildering. Of course it is true, and is taken for granted in this essay, that Mark Twain's innovations helped create a modern American prose style from which Hemingway and others have obviously benefited. But it is equally important to see that this stylistic connection is, at least with Hemingway, only one aspect of a much more comprehensive relationship.[1] Actually, Hemingway's famous praise of Mark Twain says nothing specifically about the language or syntax or rhythms of *Huckleberry Finn* (the matters most dwelt on by critics). What he does say is this: "If you read it you must stop where the Nigger Jim is stolen from the boys. That is the real end. The rest is just cheating. But it's the best book we've had. All American writing comes from that. There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since." This is fuzzy criticism; but what *can* be inferred, especially from the remark "the rest is just cheating,"[2] is that Hemingway is isolating for us the integrity of Mark Twain's writing.

A peculiar kind of integrity informs *Huckleberry Finn* — it has little to do with conventional notions of "realism" — and it is a kind

[1] In Philip Young's *Ernest Hemingway* (New York, 1952), there is an exciting chapter called "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," an essay in comparative biography and psychology. Young's view of the Mark Twain-Hemingway connection and mine are not really contradictory; they are more like Marvell's lovers, so parallel they never meet. Young's interpretation certainly covers more ground and may be more stimulating to further reflection about both writers; I would argue for mine only that it is the more literary and therefore, perhaps, more immediately useful to the study of literature.

[2] For the purposes of this essay, I want simply to make the point that Hemingway's criterion is *integrity;* I don't mean to imply that Hemingway's judgment of the end of *Huckleberry Finn* is necessarily sound, although it may be worth saying that (1) most critics of American literature have said substantially the same thing, in more temperate language, and (2) the infrequent "defenses" of the ending are curiously weak.

of integrity that has always been crucial to Hemingway. At the beginning of his career he was most articulate on this subject, and it is also in books like *In Our Time* (1924) and *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) that his kinship with Mark Twain seems most apparent. Later, Hemingway described his apprenticeship: "I was trying to write then and I found the greatest difficulty, aside from knowing truly what you truly felt [the reader of Mark Twain will recognize this as one of Huck's recurring problems], rather than what you were supposed to feel, and had been taught to feel, was to put down what really happened in action." The key to Hemingway's early writing is his passion for emotional integrity, complicated by his acute sense of the gap between experience taken first-hand and experience as frequently found in "books." Hemingway's need was to find techniques that would enable him to isolate and define the kind of emotional integrity that was his recurrent literary criterion and his favorite fictional substance. And it may be suggested that it was in the solution of this problem that Mark Twain meant most to him, and that this particular indebtedness is a valid explanation of Hemingway's hyperbolic praise of *Huckleberry Finn*.

Mark Twain was also much concerned with emotional integrity, and perhaps even more with what one might call imaginative integrity, and the central technical issue of *Huckleberry Finn* was how to establish firmly the novel's primary value, imaginative sympathy. Mark Twain's social intention demanded fictional implementation of the feelings associated with the ideals of fraternity and brotherly love, and he knew that the only way such feelings could be made to live in his book was through the empathic offices of the poetic imagination (how easily these feelings can get out of hand is definitively shown in the nineteenth-century's most devastating satire, Melville's *Confidence Man*). The problem was to keep Huck's imagination firmly related to common experience, thereby bringing the democratic values into intimate and emotionally charged relationship with the audience. It is this spirit of imaginative identification that provides the groundwork for the moral values of the book. "I begun to think how dreadful it was, even for murderers, to be in such a fix. I says to myself, there ain't no telling but I might come to be a murderer myself yet, and then how would I like it?"

Instinctively Mark Twain must have felt that this vision of imaginative sympathy needed some kind of control. This is one reason why Tom Sawyer is in the book. He is a foil to Huck, of course, but not only as the typical conventional boy. He also embodies the false

imagination that contrasts with and so establishes the true imagination represented by Huck. The best instance of such comparison is in the third chapter ("We Ambuscade the A-rabs") where, after the boys have broken up the Sunday-school picnic, Huck comments: "I didn't see no di'monds, and I told Tom Sawyer so. He said there was loads of them there, anyway, and he said there was A-rabs there, too, and elephants and things. I said, why couldn't we see them, then? He said if I warn't so ignorant but had read a book called *Don Quixote,* I would know without asking." At the end of the chapter Huck adds: "all that stuff was just one of Tom Sawyer's lies." The main point that is being made here is not Huck's skepticism (there is certainly nothing remarkable about it!), but Tom's romantic transformation of experience by means of a mistaken literal application of conventions derived from fiction. Behind Mark Twain's burlesque is a serious perception about the nature of fiction; in spite of his hatred of literary theory, he is employing a sophisticated technique and one basic to the history of the novel. And the use of *Don Quixote* suggests further that he may have been at least partly aware of what he was doing. Harry Levin's summary of some of the novel's history is instructive: "The point of departure for the modern novel is the actual contrast between truth and fiction. *Don Quixote* — to consider the primary example — is a realistic commentary upon *Amadis de Gaule* and other romantic fiction. . . . As times change, and new facts of experience clamor for literary expression, conscientious novelists must challenge, or even repudiate, the fictive and conventionalized world that previous novels have established. Fiction is constantly disclaiming the fictitious. It is no accident that many of the great realists have begun with parodies of their predecessors." Mark Twain and Hemingway have in common a similar relation to this evolutionary view of the history of fiction. And the techniques they employ to mark off their advances in "realism" are even more similar. Each is concerned with a particular kind of integrity (highly emotive and imaginative; "poetic," perhaps); each must destroy through satire and parody a corresponding sentimentality before he can establish fictionally the truth of his own values.

Huckleberry Finn, like *Don Quixote,* burlesques romantic fiction and the false imagination, curiously enough by allusion to the prototype, which Tom Sawyer has ironically taken for truth and not for parody. *Joseph Andrews,* another good starting point for modern fiction, is a parody of Richardson's *Pamela,* the title page proclaiming that it is "written in Imitation of the Manner of Cervantes, Author of DON QUIXOTE." Hemingway's early "novel," *The Torrents of*

Spring (1926), is a parody of Sherwood Anderson: on the title page and preceding each of the four parts are quotations from the "Author's Preface" to *Joseph Andrews*. The line from Cervantes to Hemingway is direct and neat.[3] Mark Twain, if not so closely, is just as surely to be related to this tradition too, and it is here that I am suggesting his connection with Hemingway is most revealing.

The Torrents of Spring, like Hemingway's other early books, is full of jibes at "writing fellows" and "poet chaps." There is a serious attitude[4] behind Hemingway's fooling, and once or twice it is made very plain: "Nobody had any damn business to write about it [World War I], though, that didn't at least know about it from hearsay. Literature has too strong an effect on people's minds. Like this American writer Willa Cather, who wrote a book about the war where all the last part of it was taken from the action in the 'Birth of a Nation,' and ex-servicemen wrote to her from all over America to tell her how much they liked it." Stylistically, Hemingway concentrates on Sherwood Anderson, making fun of qualities in Anderson's writing (primitivism, mysticism, understatement) that seemed dangerously close to his own emphases.

Mark Twain's burlesque of literature in *Huckleberry Finn* has a similar intention. If his main purpose was the establishment of imaginative sympathy, then not only Tom's bookish and literal false imagination but any kind of false imagination or false sympathy needed carefully to be ruled out of bounds. So in the description of Emmaline Grangerford's poetry and painting Mark Twain satirizes the decadence or corruption of the very qualities with which he has endowed Huck and which he is trying to make stand as the primary social and moral values of the novel. Emmaline is ridiculous because she derives a false emotion from her indulgence in excessive or misplaced sympathy. Her feelings are remote from life and are caricatures of true emotions. But they are precisely the emotions (pity, fraternity, identification, sorrow) that motivate Huck. Mark Twain's most magnificent flourish is to allow Huck momentarily to identify himself with her emotionally: "Poor Emmaline made poetry about all the dead people when she was alive, and it didn't seem right that there warn't nobody to make some

[3] This line is traced in Harry Levin, "Hemingway's Style," *Kenyon Review*, XIII (Autumn, 1951), 591; I have merely added *Huckleberry Finn*.

[4] Hemingway's attitude is "serious" because it represents an especially forceful articulation of feelings which underlie much of his writing; that Hemingway rarely allows them such irritable expression does not argue them any less genuine. And on this point at least, I think the peculiar circumstances of publication (see Carlos Baker, *Hemingway*, pp. 37-38) have no bearing.

about her now she was gone; so I tried to sweat out a verse or two myself but I couldn't seem to make it go somehow." What Mark Twain is so brilliantly doing here has been exactly described by Hemingway in his remarks about the bull-fighter Belmonte in *The Sun Also Rises:* "he knew that the sincerity of his own bull-fighting would be so set off by the false aesthetics of the bull-fighters of the decadent period that he would only have to be in the ring."

Hemingway learned early how to do much the same thing with writers. For example, in "The Three Day Blow," one of the stories from *In Our Time,* Nick Adams and his friend Bill are talking about the books they have read, and Bill asks:

> "Did you read the *Forest Lovers?*"
>
> "Yup. That's the one where they go to bed every night with the naked sword between them."
>
> "That's a good book . . ."
>
> "It's a swell book. What I couldn't ever understand was what good the sword would do. It would have to stay edge up all the time because if it went over flat you could roll right over it and it wouldn't make any trouble."
>
> "It's a symbol," Bill said.
>
> "Sure," said Nick, "but it isn't practical."

Behind the antipathy to an unreal poetics is a pragmatic approach to experience that is the very essence of Hemingway's art, as it had been in Mark Twain's best work. But there is an important difference between the two men which has not been mentioned yet: it is the question of what underlies ethical judgment, and their different answers here determine in part the purposes to which literary parody is put.

Mark Twain's ethics depended almost entirely and very directly on what I have called imaginative sympathy. Throughout his work, he keeps returning to the difficulty of communicating the true feeling of an experience and the impossibility of sympathy among men unless this feeling can somehow be expressed. In *The Mysterious Stranger* (1916), the inhuman (or "unhuman") amorality and total lack of sympathy in Satan are caused by his incapacity for human experience: "He had never felt a pain or a sorrow, and did not know what they were, in any really informing way. He had no knowledge of them except theoretically — that is to say, intellectually. And of course that is no good. One can never get any but a loose and ignorant notion of such things except by experience." This is, in effect, Mark Twain's theory of literature, his personal statement of the main premises of

nineteenth-century English and American romanticism. The idea is expressed fictionally in *Huckleberry Finn,* at the conclusion of one of the few episodes in which Huck has shown himself deficient in imaginative sympathy and therefore immoral ("Fooling Poor Old Jim"): "It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger — but I done it and I warn't ever sorry for it afterward, neither. I didn't do him no more mean tricks, and I wouldn't done that one if I'd 'a' knowed it would make him feel that way." This is perhaps as good an exposition as one can find of Mark Twain's belief that right action depends essentially on the full empathic realization of another person's predicament. Hemingway often adopts the same stance (curiously, the following passage also contains a striking echo of Mark Twain's lingo; Brett and Jake are talking):

> "When I think of the hell I've put chaps through. I'm paying for it all now."
>
> "Don't talk like a fool," I said. "Besides, what happened to me is supposed to be funny. I never think about it."
>
> "Oh, no. I'll lay you don't."
>
> "Well, let's shut up about it."
>
> "I laughed about it too, myself, once." She wasn't looking at me. "A friend of my brother's came home that way from Mons. It seemed like a hell of a joke. Chaps never know anything, do they?"
>
> "No," I said. "Nobody ever knows anything."

But more usually in Hemingway's fiction right action depends rather on the emotional integrity of the individual than on his ability to feel himself into another situation.[5] For this reason Hemingway's dislike of false emotion is more likely to be centered on the emotional corruption within the individual than Mark Twain's and less on the social effects (this distinction applies to the characters in the fiction: as for the social effects of literature, Hemingway's remarks on Willa Cather show that he shared Mark Twain's concern over the social damage caused by bad romantic fiction). His most striking and characteristic pronouncement on morality is in *Death in the Afternoon* (1932): "I know only that what is moral is what you feel good after and what is immoral is what you feel bad after." This is the system

[5] Mark Twain occasionally approaches the Hemingway emphasis, but rarely with entire seriousness. Huck, in a moment of "conscience": "S'pose you'd 'a' done right and give Jim up, would you felt better than what you do now? No, says I, I'd feel bad — I'd feel just the same way I do now. . . . So I reckoned I wouldn't bother no more about it, but after this always do whichever come handiest at the time."

of ethics that underlies *The Sun Also Rises,*[5] and that is made explicit at the end:

> "You know it makes one feel rather good deciding not to be a bitch."
>
> "Yes."
>
> "It's sort of what we have instead of God."

Setting aside the appalling sentimentality of that last sentence, it is probably fair to say that most of the time Brett and Jake feel accurately and honestly and that, as a consequence, they finally act properly. And just as Mark Twain had contrasted the true and false imaginative sympathy in Huck and Tom and Emmaline Grangerford, so Hemingway works repeated contrasts between true and false emotion by comparing Jake and Brett with Robert Cohn, and again the comparison is made by means of literary reference. One of the first things we learn about Cohn is that he has been in California, where "he fell among literary people." A few pages later Jake explains what is wrong with him: "He had been reading W. H. Hudson. That sounds like an innocent occupation, but Cohn had read and reread *The Purple Land*. *The Purple Land* is a very sinister book if read too late in life. It recounts splendid imaginary amorous adventures of a perfect English gentleman in an intensely romantic land, the scenery of which is very well described. For a man to take it at thirty-four as a guidebook to what life holds is about as safe as it would be for a man of the same age to enter Wall Street direct from a French convent, equipped with a complete set of the more practical Alger books." Cohn understands no one, himself least of all. He has no sympathy and no imagination. He is a would-be writer. He has no wit, no irony — none of the qualities that make parody possible. All this comes out in the devastating anecdote told by Brett's fiancé Mike (see also the terrible scene between Cohn and Frances at the Café Select, in ch. vi):

> "Look, Brett. Tell Jake what Robert calls you. That *is* perfect, you know."
>
> "Oh, no. I can't"
>
> "Go on. We're all friends. Aren't we all friends, Jake?"
>
> "I can't tell him. It's too ridiculous."
>
> "I'll tell him."

[5] Here is a nice negative instance of its operation: "I have never seen a man in civil life as nervous as Robert Cohn — nor as eager. I was enjoying it. It was lousy to enjoy it, but I felt lousy. Cohn had a wonderful quality of bringing out the worst in anybody."

"You won't, Michael. Don't be an ass."
"He calls her Circe," Mike said. "He claims she turns men into swine. Damn good. I wish I were one of these literary chaps."

Imaginative sympathy and emotional integrity: Hemingway has a Spanish word that seems to cover both, *aficion,* which he translates "passion." In *The Sun Also Rises,* Jake observes that the Spaniards were always a little surprised by his *aficion.* "Somehow it was taken for granted that an American could not have aficion. He might simulate it or confuse it with excitement, but he could not really have it." Hemingway seems to have felt the lack of this quality in American writing as in American life; and it is probably the plenitude of this quality in Mark Twain, coupled with his knowledge of the technical and stylistic means necessary to get it into fiction, that primarily accounts for Hemingway's literary discipleship.

ARTHUR CARSON:

The Moon

The moon lies above the sea
like an anger.
It lives in a house of wild dreams.

How it is round and cold.

Will the round moon roll down
grown, doomed and cold, deadly
under the water in the well,
drowned, ruled in the walls,
ruined, a prisoner,
a yellow flower?

Or will it lie on the sea
like a round boy, angry, with fists,
regarding over the wall
the yellow flowers and
the yellow flowers broken?

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E. G. BURROWS:

Response

By the gate of Medish bulls,
Ishtar descended,
walked in her seven skirts
out of stale Babylon:

they are burning a firewood cross
in Gehenna's gully.

Her hands were brittle with gems,
her ankles with bells
bound, and her eyes humble
as ptarmigan's eyes:

they have levered an iron nail
from Calvary's lumber.

To her love in death's lock she came,
redeeming godhead,
to the tang of his beard and forearm
(fall, snow, on Babylon):

they have cleared a cave among olives
for a forthright man.

By the gate of snarling lions,
Ishtar descended,
and came disrobed and gemless
into the arms of spring:

women have come with pence
for the eyes of the body of God.

JOSEPH WARREN BEACH:

Night Over Leopoldskron

Summer of 1950

The blackness here is full of the drugged sleep
Of treetops locked in vegetable dream,
Threaded with silences of the Alm pouring
Steadily out of the mountain milky jade
Past meadows where the piled hay reeks. And most
The Untersberg, insistent shadowy presence
Distinct as fate and as inscrutable.

For Leopold, his mountain shed a grace
On Watteau figures in a fête champêtre
And made of steps down to his weedy lake
A port of embarkation for Cythera.
For Max, the tamed mountain served as backdrop
For a stage set with beechen thickets and posturing
Myths in mouldy stone that lent a spurious
Heightening to his commedia dell'arte.

But now, through noons of hushed expectancy
And blandly brooding twilights, more authentic
And sinister beauty walls our garden round
With hooded issues unresolved
In the stilled treetops and waters never stilled
And in the dark womb of the mountain where
The embryo Time ripens and bides his time.

Young Frenchman

Begin with mask — only mask not for hiding
But making manifest — not carnival
Cardboard grimace of self-deriding
Monster, by distortion definition . . .

But that's the clue that brings us to death-mask,
The final definition and refinement
Of all the living man meant.
Young Frenchman in the metro, in himself

Sunk deep, leaving us only the shadowed cheekbones
Between forehead and chin, the fleshed stone
Under myriad atmospheric pressures
Planed and moulded. Ship's beak

That through dense mountainous water makes way
And leaves its boiling wake.
Beak sharpened with pressure of its own momentum
Against the grindstone of plunging waves . . .

Then mask, but mask whose muscled grin
Rippling the corners of the mouth and lightly
Stirring the pursed lips, bespeaks
The liveness of the breath within.

This sleeping smile like motes of light
On clouded seas translates the old debate
Between pain suffered and joy sighted, the zest
Upon a Frenchman's lips at sight

Of spirit at grips with matter, in fifty-two
Still keen as in the year of Alceste
Or Pantagruel . . . Ah, but the best
Is undiscovered, where introverted eyes

In the intermittence of the underground
Will add no lustre to the theme
Of hell dodged, and suggest no shame
For a world that still misses its Thélème.

IRENE HAY DE URIBE:

Sois Sage Ô Ma Douleur

Madame Monfort would be glad to be rid of a servant she was embarrassed to address. She would have called the creature by her first name, as one did such persons before the war, but the woman's given name was Lili. It was an unsavory sound in itself and, as the woman had never been in service before, had presumably been pronounced only tenderly or at least familiarly for over fifty years, by heaven knew what dismal people. The children called her "Mademoiselle," although her identity card read "Lili Bert, épouse Hurot," and carried the further distressing data that she was born in 1898 and divorced in 1944.

She was the third, and Madame Monfort had just decided the worst, of a melancholy series of nursemaids sent her by a charitable agency which tried to salvage small middle-class lives wrecked by the war. The first had been a young orphaned Jewess, a convert, naturally, since the Charitable Christian ladies looked chiefly after their own, and she had spent her bitterness making Madame Monfort politically uncomfortable. Afterwards had come the peaked Mademoiselle Billaut, whose dingy fourteen-room hotel had been burned down at the Liberation. Her harsh efficiency and sordid avarice had been trying enough, but now Madame Monfort could view them, and even her salacious reminiscences, with tolerance, when she compared her to Lili Hurot, who was obviously mad.

The woman's greasy cord bag sprawled open on the spotless linen of the dining table. Two soiled, paper-covered parcels, a wrinkled silk kerchief, an empty litre bottle, and a red leather glasses-case slumped dejectedly in its pouch. She was telling her employer for the twentieth time how much wretchedness she had endured, what treachery she had suffered at the hands of the villainous Jacques Hurot. Tears filled her great myopic eyes, trembled on the loose-hung rims and formed oddly round globules as they slid over her rouged and downy cheeks. The younger woman scowled in irritation, but Lili took it for anger at the man who had left her penniless, sold her mother's rosewood bedroom set, and run off with a female Vichyite informer. — Why wasn't he put in prison at the Liberation? You may well ask! In that town the police were strong enough to protect themselves,

or they knew enough details of local Résistance "justice" to guarantee their own immunity. Jacques had risen to the rank of Inspector under the aegis of his bloodthirsty mistress, and had weathered the change of regime unscathed, due to some freak of village corruption. The woman had had her head shaved; a vain young hussy she was, too.

The Monfort children had been dressed for the park for twenty minutes, and now they were hot and cross. Marie-France, pinned down by her older brother's knee, screamed, "Pig! and pig! and pig!" as he tried to stuff her gloves into her mouth.

"He must have been pleased with her that night, the slut. Oh, my hair was thick when I was a girl. I was a real blonde type, with hair I could sit on. Now it has all fallen out. I've seen so much. I've been through so much. Ah, Madame, if you knew how much."

"Enough! I've heard enough of that!" said Madame Monfort sharply, as Marie-France broke into a terrified, choking wail and Guy started to hiss, "Imbecile, idiot, cretin." Chantal had sucked the colored wool of her glove until her round baby mouth was covered with lint and stained blue. Madame Monfort slapped the baby's hand out of her mouth and pulled Marie-France roughly to her feet. A smell of burning came from the kitchen. The bottle, which twenty minutes ago Lili had put on to heat for the baby, had cracked, and the burner was dripping with the sticky mixture.

When Madame Monfort returned to the foyer, Lili was wiping the baby's mouth with the silk kerchief from her bag and crooning to her with soft, sobbing sounds. She seemed to be mocking her own sorrow as well as the child's. "I have asked you *not* to use anything but their own linen for the children. I think it unsanitary," she said, as kindly as her discovery that the woman was mad would allow. "You'll find another bottle in the frigidaire."

"You know, I didn't mention it before, but those bottles are extremely fragile. I think they must be a very poor quality. I fed my boys from the breast," she thumped her bloated flesh, rattling a bunch of medallions beneath her loose blouse. "Of course, it ruins the bustline, and mine was something to see, but that is motherhood. Sacrifice and pain. A woman's glory, but what sorrow, what sacrifice."

When Lili finally took the children out, Madame Monfort verified that the stove had not been sponged off, nor the saucepan washed, and the formula mixture was burned to the metal. Feeling an elated indignation that caressed her self-esteem, she put the dirty units and the pan to soak, and then briskly turned over the tablecloth. Cleanliness

to her was pride of class, a daily rite of rank, her letters patent and her blazon. She carried out its rituals with passion, and loved as live things the fragrant waxed parquet, the cold brass glints from knobs and handles, the starched linens glowing in shuttered daytime rooms. She loved the organism of her household, each ripe fruit from the market, empty bottles to be filled and full ones ranged in line. Lili Hurot's slovenliness flattered her conceit, but the creature was mad, and would have to go. Madame Monfort's world was filled with goodly things her hands could clasp, and no hands could hold Lili's vastly flowing sorrow, nor quiet her shifting memories; no clarity ordered the dirty objects in her handbag, no corset stilled her sad, vague flesh. Madame Monfort neatly disposed the hours of her afternoon to include a short and final interview with Lili.

Pushing the stroller toward the park, Lili confided her passing thoughts to Guy, who although nearly seven was not allowed to let go of the handle bar until they had crossed the rue de Rivoli — there was never a policeman at their crossing — and entered the park. This was one of his mother's many iron laws which had endured though its administrators fell, and Lili did not bother to question it, although the boy's bulky boots splashed water on her ankles at the crossings, and Marie-France tugged so hard it was difficult to steer. The glittering displays of cheap jewelry and knickknacks in the shops under the arcades enchanted the little girl, and she loved to prolong the walk to the park through this magic antechamber. Guy was satisfied to walk on the streetside of the stroller and stare at the chauffeurs flicking feather dusters at parked automobiles, the occasional venders of curious wares leaning against the pillars, National Guardsmen parading gorgeously past on horseback, and all the bustle of traffic that flowed between him and the gold-and-black grill of the Tuileries across the street.

"When my Nicolas was a little boy, he used to love to go about with me. He'd carry my bag and my packages when we went marketing. He used to say when he was a man he'd marry only his Maman." She stroked Guy's blue cap. "Dear little boys, dear little Nicolas."

"I'm going to marry my cousin Marthe," said Guy. "She has a sailboat. She's been to Canada. She has a turtle and she goes to the movies every week. Every *day* she goes to the movies. Every day."

"Oh why must you all grow up, dear little ones? My Nicolas with his head covered with curls. I didn't cut his dear baby hair until he was six. People took him for a girl, his face was so delicate.' '

"Where is your little boy?" asked Marie-France. "Where is your papa? Why don't they come to the garden with us?"

Tears filled Lili's eyes and she patted the child's cheek. "Far away. They are far away. And Nicolas is very ill."

"Will he die?" asked Marie-France. "My aunt was very ill and she went away and she died. Maman cried and cried."

"That was not your aunt," said Guy. "It was your godmother."

"It was not."

"Cretin."

They had arrived opposite the gate, and the perilous crossing was accomplished, Lili half running, and tensely crushing the children's fingers to the handle bar as she painfully concentrated all her wits. Nothing must be forgotten, or overlooked, or left to chance in such a moment, and each day as she focussed her energy to cross the street, a jumble of things lost or neglected joggled inside her head like the pieces of glass in a kaleidoscope. She told the children she was terribly afraid of being hit by a car, and they said they were too, pleased to share a grown-up dread.

When they were safe inside the Tuileries, Lili pushed the stroller toward a sheltered corner where she would be hidden from passers-by, and where she could sit on a public bench and not have to spend four francs on a chair. Here baby Chantal could push her stroller along the gravel path, and Guy could discipline Marie-France in games of "war," or "wolf," or "school," and Lili could fidget and weep and sing. Here the little ones would not be kidnapped or lured away, her handbag would not be stolen; the precious kerchief containing magnetized fluids for her migraine, the bag of wheat germ, the sleeping drug, the photographs, the deposit bottle, — all was safe in this corner, hedged in by box-thorn and marble, and as though by a special grace, she could see the clock on the Louvre and need not be constantly nervous about the time. Her only worry was that some other nursemaid might compete for the spot, but so far she had seen only solitary old men in that part of the park, brooding or lunching surreptitiously, and usually the children frightened them away. Here, safe and unquestioned, she could let her fancy float on the billowy, sobbing ethers of past wrongs and present griefs.

"I can see your belly," whispered Marie-France, sliding up and leaning against Lili's shoulder. She looked down at her faded blouse and realized it was unfastened; the child was peeping guiltily at her pink chemise. Lili stuck the safety pin back in place. "It's very

impolite to show your belly," said Marie-France. "When I am grown up and you are a little girl, I'll whack you for that if you do it again."

Lili smiled and embraced the child. "When you are grown up you'll have your own little babies to whack, and I'll be an old, old lady. You won't remember me then."

"You'll be a little girl and I'll give you candies when you cry." The child put her finger on a fat tear on Lili's cheek and looked at her in surprise. "Was your papa a wicked, wicked man?" She meant Lili's husband.

"Yes, dear."

"He ran away from you with a wicked lady," said Guy, taking up the familiar fairy tale.

"And you were all alone, and he took your money, poor Mademoiselle, and you had no house and you slept outdoors," said Marie-France crooningly. Chantal crashed the stroller into the fence and began to fret. Lili took her on her lap and hummed into her bonnet in a sweet, childlike voice.

"You cried and cried until you got very sick," said Marie-France. "Then you went to Rome to see the Pope."

"They will both die and go to Hell," said Guy.

"Oh no, that's not true," said Marie-France in alarm.

"Yes it is, they will surely go to Hell, and Mademoiselle will go to Heaven, like us."

"I saw Mademoiselle's little belly," sang out Marie-France desperately. She did not like Guy to talk about Hell.

"I saw your fat behind," he retorted, snatching up her skip-rope and rapping her knees with the wooden handles. They ran off pummeling each other, and the baby snuggled down and went to sleep. Lili tenderly passed her magnetized kerchief over the sleeping child's forehead to bring her sweet dreams, and drifted back into her own tortured fantasy, where her Christian conscience struggled against the joy of wishing Jacques and Monique in Hell.

At five-thirty the interview scheduled by Madame Monfort took place. Her short, lacquered fingernails drummed on the table while she said as kindly as possible that she would pay Lili for the two remaining days of the week, and take care of her Social Security, but that she need not come back after today. She would always be willing to give a character reference, she added, relenting.

Surprisingly, Lili's vacant blue stare gave no hint of disappointment or chagrin. It softened into a comprehending, compassionate

smile. The children loved her too much, and the mother had finally guessed it. She of course loved them too, and understood their needs so much better than the mother — the baby's need of lovely dreams, the boy's need of Hell. "Don't feel bad about me," she said at last, tears of bereavement rising gently, checked by a gentle smile. "I had an offer just last week, not far from here, as a matter of fact. The wages are the same, and the work lighter. I refused, because I didn't want to leave these dear little ones. But now . . .

"You know the Abbé Forbin, who used to be at Saint-Roch? His old mother is nearly blind, and wants a companion. That will be lovely work, you know, so don't feel badly about me. I'll come and see the children now and then in the park. I've grown so fond of them. Children are good for me; they help me think about the bright side. I've seen so much of the other, the dark side of life . . .

"My own little boys meant a lot to me, but now Rodrigue has turned against me, like his father. Sometimes I'd rather he were dead, God forgive me. And Nicolas, my dear Nicolas . . . Your Guy will be like him, and you may thank God for it. A tender, loving, faithful son." Her voice trailed off and she seemed to be looking about the room for her own lost children.

Madame Monfort wished her well in her new post, paid her, and finally closed the door between her own orderly, polished world and Lili's fragmentary, clouded dreams. She bathed the children herself, and scrubbed off Lili's caresses and magnetic charms with relief and satisfaction. She resolved to bring a girl from the country, although the train fare was high, and stop these futile and harrowing experiments in middle-class philanthropy. Marie-France received a smart, pleasing slap when she confided that she had seen Mademoiselle's belly, and that was an end to that.

The Abbé Forbin's aged mother lived in a dark, uncomfortable flat in the rue Saint-Georges. The street had been fashionable in the 1840's, and after a hundred years still retained a certain savour of elegance, but the blinds were hooked precariously in loose hinges, and the stairways sagged. In the days before Haussmann built the pompous boulevards, Madame Forbin's father had bought the house in the rue Saint-Georges, and magnificently occupied the front apartment on the second floor. Madame Forbin had been born there, and this in itself should have been a lifelong assurance of prestige.

Later, people of their class moved out of their elegant second-floor-front apartments in the graceful streets around the Chaussée d'Antin,

and into the elephantine structures along the boulevards. Madame Forbin was now glad enough to live in a tiny, dark flat off the court, and collect the rents from the small businesses which now occupied the larger apartments. And even then with the taxes, the constant repairs, and the concierge being unionized and demanding more and more money, there was not much left to provide the small consolations she felt were her due.

Her son was not often in Paris, for his work consisted in leading retreats at various outlying convents and monasteries, trying to heal the members of Christ whom commerce, child-bearing, poverty or disgrace had crippled, and his mother was left to make shift with whatever sediment of the middle class the Christian ladies sent her as housekeepers. As she approached ninety, her sight had failed, and by an automatic economy of her failing powers, the first alarmed quickening of the other senses had clouded into a single acute faculty of suspicion. Old age, like drunkenness, had borne necessity from a new womb of wishes, dulling all but the dearest intelligence and the flesh's urgency. She confided to a pair of yellow birds her rankling envy of the secrets of the confessional, known to her son, for she was insensible to her own sorrow, and sought a vicarious life in the pain felt by others. Mourning her, in tardy courtship the Abbé brought her sweets, which he could ill afford.

Lili arrived the same day as the marrons glacés and Jean-Francois' letter from Paray-le-Monial. If Lili had known, she might have had one of the sweets in exchange for the story of Jacques' odious betrayal, the hint of prisoners tortured for Monique's excitement, the lovely image of the depraved woman shorn by vindictive conquerors, but in her haste she gave them free. Madame Forbin sucked the chestnuts noisily and clicked an ivory abacus while Lili prepared a soup of lettuce-leaves and potatoes, and tidied up the apartment. She would have stolen a lump of sugar, for the suggestive sound roused her even from the other room, but the glass-faced cupboard was locked, and the key lay in a button-tray close to the greedy old crone and her box of luminous fruits.

Lili thought of little Guy, who had shared his gouter chocolate with her in the park, and of Marie-France who used to give her sticky candies she had saved in little pieces of paper. She thought of all the hungry poor, even in her compassion of the hungry rich who grew pale during the war, when, to be truthful, she herself had had flour and sometimes even butter. Tears salted Madame Forbin's lettuce-and-potato soup; tears anointed her curios.

As the days went by, Lili's generous tears fell upon the old woman's arid heart, and it flowered strangely. Her flabby, pyramidal fingers flicked off Lili's sorrows on the ivory abacus; she tallied them into her count of rents, into the day's expenditures, into the intricate, thrilling game of rationing out the candies to fill the hours. All these things she counted on the yellowed beads in a resurgence of life, while Lili made her thin soups and lean meats, cleaned the birds' cage, and kept the dust off Sèvres shepherdesses, crumbling lace fans, brass candle-snuffers, Chinese boxes, and a dozen other objects precious to the vanished girls and women who had made up the life of this obese, senile Madame Forbin.

Lili one day knocked a tiny pair of scissors with violet enamel handles into her yawning apron pocket, and discovered them there when she was in the Metro going home. She kept them for a day or two, entranced by their fragile, useless charm, then chipped them by accident, and had to face her theft. In her guilt, she offered Madame Forbin the story of Rodrigue's desertion, stunningly jeweled with the pathos of her pride at his wealth and her pain at his weakness. Her eldest son lived in Clermont-Ferrand, married to the daughter of a wealthy café owner. He enjoyed his wife's fortune in idyllic leisure, went to Austria for skiing and to the Ardennes for hunting, and let his mother struggle against poverty and support his brother Nicolas as best she could.

Madame Forbin, who did not miss the scissors, clicked Rodrigue, his wife and their estimated descendants into her tally of doom. The ninety years separating her meagre life from her father's opulence had schooled her in perfect malice; she enjoyed probing the constant pain of another déclassée, and by a peculiar identification with her victim, she damned Lili's adversaries along with her own.

The day Lili's tears for Rodrigue washed clean the crime of the scissors was the day the candied cherries came. The Abbé Forbin could not be home for the feast of Saint Catherine, his mother's patron saint, so he sent her a box of candied cherries with his filial and sacerdotal blessing. Not to be cheated out of her bitterness, Madame Forbin deprived herself of eating them for half a day; she sat like an immense black spider in her dim room, and played Rodrigue–Jean-Francois, Rodrigue–Jean-Francois on the abacus, spinning an evil spell out of her white fingers to poison the souls of ungrateful sons.

The cherries lay open on the table, and as no nourishing venom quenched her desire, Lili yearned after their firm, sweet flesh. Grieving,

she dusted the bookcase, remembering cherries in her father's orchard, chocolate-covered cherries Jacques had sometimes brought her in celebration of their carnal harmony, sugared cherries she had shared in the park with her sons, she in a new velvet toque, the little blond boys in sailor suits, with toy boats under their arms. Rodrique had fallen into the boat pond and caught pneumonia, always the daring, gallant one. The war had soured her man; it was not their fault, but the sadness of evil times. She was sorry to have given Rodrigue's sin to the fat, malevolent fairy who sat now spinning out retributions.

Absently dusting, she pushed the top off a lacquered box, and then with mounting curiosity examined the deck of cards that lay inside. They were oddly shaped, and their singular figures and symbols were not like any she had ever seen. A little brochure lay with them, a key to the divining Tarot, and Lili turned its flimsy pages avidly. It explained each card, with its portent of destiny: Queen of Cups, a rich marriage; Nine of Cups, a pregnancy; Nine of Swords, beware of poisoning; the Hanged Man, ingratitude, a sacrifice; the Sun, happiness; the World, fortune and success.

It was noon; Jean-Francois' penance was over. Madame Forbin deigned to eat the cherries he had sent, and Lili placed the Nine of Swords (beware of poisoning) face upwards in the lacquered box. She took the brochure home with her and, after three or four days of coveting them, took the cards.

Her son Nicolas, with whom she shared two tiny rooms, was usually out at the movies when Lili got home from work. There was no honorable work in Paris for a lazy, untrained mind in a sickly body, so Nicolas had been two years out of the sanatorium, and two years bored and unemployed. Lili worried about his coughing and made him eat spoonfuls of moistened wheat germ. She stealthily spread her magnetized kerchief over him at night, and made desultory novenas for him at Notre-Dame-des-Victories. The night she brought Madame Forbin's Tarot pack home, he was out, as usual, and Lili drank her beer and ate her warm bread in haste, then laid out the cards in a pattern of her own devising.

Juno (herself) was conjugated with the Star: hope in the midst of your adversity, the shadows will fall away, the way to happiness will be shown you. Jacques, the King of Swords (a dark man, an enemy), was threatened by the Lightning-struck Tower (catastrophe) and, she heaped on coals of fire, the Eight of Swords: tried, imprisoned and sentenced to death. She was just predicting poverty and ruin for

Monique, when she heard Nicolas' step on the landing, and she quickly slipped the cards out of sight. She sent him back down for another bottle of beer, in a spirit of celebration. She believed, too, that anything made from malt strengthened the lungs. They shared the beer in separate, affectionate silence, then went to bed.

Lili did not fall asleep at once, preoccupied as she was with the last group of cards she had laid out. The Knight of Cups: a lover, an adultery; the Moon: hidden danger. Madame Monfort was carrying on a dangerous liaison. Poor little Guy must not ever know. And Monsieur Monfort, always so polite, so aloof; he would not guess until it was too late, and his home had been broken. Then he would remember how Lili had loved his children, and call her back, plead with her to come. Lili slept at last, cradled warmly in the exquisite misfortunes of her persecutors.

Madame Forbin accused her next morning, as she did every day, of cheating on the household accounts. Lili did the shopping, and of course did cheat whenever she could, chiefly out of a loathing for accuracy. Today she was cheerful, aloof, invulnerable. The old woman could not confuse her, or bring her to tears as she liked to do, nor, failing that, could she provoke any scabrous confidences. Lili went about humming secretly, and Madame Forbin rattled her abacus in furious annoyance. Toward noon, however, the secret grew large and needed to be shared, and Lili hinted at scandal. At tea-time, she told that Madame Monfort had a lover, and Madame Forbin rejoiced in the tragedy of a family she did not know, and in the decadence of times she would not live to see.

That evening Lili sent Nicolas, who was lying down, feeling tired, to a double feature to change his mood, and laid out a splendid destiny for him. She never left anything to chance in her combinations, but used the cards as implements of sorcery. Nicolas, the Chariot, would crush his enemies and conquer success; Queen of Pentacles: he would marry an heiress; Ace of Cups: a seduction. She was no doubt his mistress already. How blind a mother is! She had believed him at the movies every night, and all the time there had been this girl. He was ashamed of his poverty, of his mother's servitude — and it was only natural — so he had never spoken of it. What delicacy, after all, what refinement of tact.

After the marriage she would go to live with them, and the young wife would weep over the mother's past griefs. Lili finished the beer she had brought for two, and then with loving shrewdness, locked

her son out for the night. He would go back to her, to his blonde mistress, the Queen of Pentacles, and the spring night's magic would work the cards' augury.

Next morning Lili found Nicolas asleep on the cold landing, his breath rasping softly in his throat. The girl had sent him away, poor dear, or he had left out of respect for her fair name. Clucking maternally over the reverses of young love, she aroused the boy, who was too tired to reproach her, and helped him to bed.

She could not tell Madame Forbin of Nicolas' good fortune, since she avoided mentioning his presence to her employers. She could not remember whether she had said he was in the sanatorium, or had died in childhood, and she did not want to awaken suspicion by speaking of him. She thought it extraordinary luck that she met Madame Monfort when she went marketing that morning, although she had gone at the hour she knew she very likely would, and to a street she usually avoided.

She kissed Marie-France and Chantal, asked about Guy's school, said Yes, she was happy in her new job and getting on well. Madame Monfort would have parted at that, but Lili was bursting with her news. "I like the work well enough, it is less tiring than children — although, the dears, I loved your three little ones. Do they remember me, the lambs?

"But soon I won't have to work any more. You know, until the war, and my tragedy — you'll never know all I've been through — I never had to work. I had servants myself; I know what it is to run a house, oh yes, I had girls working for me, too. I know." Chantal stood up in her stroller and rocked precariously in her harness, shrieking with pleasure. Marie-France wandered off to look in the window of a pastry shop named *Chez Thérèse*.

Lili clutched Madame Monfort's sleeve in her excitement and moved her face close. "But now my son, my dear Nicolas, is making a very advantageous marriage. His father-in-law will give him a very interesting position, and I will have to leave Madame Forbin to live in the suburbs with him and his Thérèse. You can imagine how happy I am." Lili then bethought herself of the impending break-up of Madame Monfort's home. Her easy tears flowed, and she caressed the poor, abandoned babies and cryptically wished their mother happiness in her new life.

"There is no one like a mother, no one can ever replace their mother. Oh, think of that in years to come. Remember what I tell

you now. They have only one mother. Poor, dear lambs." Choked with pity, she embraced the startled Madame Monfort and disappeared down the crowded street. The creature was patently mad.

On Saint Joan's day, the Abbé Forbin passed through Paris, and brought his mother chocolates. He spoke kindly to Lili, and gave her a medallion of the Sacred Heart, commending her for her devotion to Madame Forbin, and mentioning heavenly rewards. He gave her an unexpectedly earthly reward from the box of chocolates, and agreed that times were hard and men's souls soured by the war.

Lili liked his greying good looks, and that night predicted happiness for him through the protection of a blonde woman. She did not pursue this thought, out of piety, and the sad remembrance of her faded beauty, but passed quickly on to Madame Forbin, who had hidden the box to prevent her son from offering Lili a second chocolate. The Sword protects the virtuous and punishes the wicked; the Nine of Swords: fear poisoning; the Skeleton: fear death.

Nicolas had not come home, so she locked the door, took a sedative and went to bed. A telegram messenger carrying the news that the boy had fainted in the street and been taken to the hospital failed to wake her, and she left in the morning satisfied that her stratagem had succeeded.

Lili was cheerful that morning. She spoke kindly to the yellow birds. She told Madame Forbin the story of Jacques and Monique and how they had had black market gas all through the war. The car was rightfully Lili's, because she had won the money for it in the National Lottery on Christmas. He had taken her furniture and sold it; and it was not so much that Monique was young and desirable, but the war had crazed him. It had crazed Rodrique too; her men had had to hurt her, to destroy her, in order to complete the fusion of right with wrong. Had it not crazed everyone? There was Madame Monfort, leaving her lovely home and her little children, still babies, to run away with a good-for-nothing.

Lili wept for the motherless Monfort children as she went about her work. She promised the yellow birds she would never leave them, never let them fall into careless or cruel hands. Madame Forbin paid her that night — it was a Saturday — and she deducted the value of a platter Lili had broken. When the old woman was in bed, Lili covered the little yellow orphans with her magnetized kerchief, then she emptied the bottle of sleeping drug into Madame Forbin's saccharin-steeped tisane and wished her sweet sleep.

ROBERT CHAMPIGNY:
Sartre and Genet

JEAN GENET: *The Maids, Deathwatch,* two plays; with an introduction by J. P. Sartre; trans. B. Frechtman. The Grove Press.

Sartre's introduction is an adaptation of appendix III in *Saint Genet comédien et martyr,* a voluminous and somewhat indigestible existential analysis of Genet. Without the context of this book, a few remarks in the introduction remain enigmatic. For example, the *rapprochement* between the criminal and the saint and, in the last lines, the metamorphosis of being and nothingness into Good and Evil.

This passage from an ontological to an ethical vocabulary has been the main concern of Sartre since *L'Etre et le néant.* It was already conspicuous in *Les Mouches.* In *Le Diable et le bon Dieu* and in *Saint Genet comédien et martyr,* Sartre expatiates on the same theme.

Being and nothingness are two limiting concepts. Sartrean consciousness is ambiguously both. The main precept of Sartrean ethics is to assume this ambiguity. Otherwise, one forsakes the human condition. The morals of authority and passivity propose a set of stereotyped conducts. Value is reduced to abstract or concrete being. What is is good. In a social context, the assimilation between Good and Being is effected by the conservative elements, that is, in so far as French society is concerned, the bourgeois class.

Non-being, for Sartre, is active: it is the power of negation. It is because we are not, at the same time that we are (something), that we can enter the realm of value: value should be, thus is not. But in a society in which the Good has been identified with actual conditions by the dominant class, non-being appears purely destructive (instead of permitting creation) and is thus identified with evil (the devil in *Le Diable et le bon Dieu).* Not only this, but non-being is shorn of most of its destructive power and is permitted to manifest itself only in marginal, ineffectual activities.

Human existence is cut in two. The bourgeois embodies being, hence the good. In the margin of his conservative society, certain scapegoats are entrusted with "incarnating" non-being, that is, evil. Such safety-valves are the Christianity of the saint (in opposition to the Christendom of the pharisee), the irony of the esthete (see the Romantic and Surrealist futile criticism of the bourgeois), certain types of criminality.

According to Sartre, this regrettable parallelism reflects a radical split between being and non-being and an identification of the Good with being. Sartre's Baudelaire, an esthete and would-be mystic, entitles his poems *Les Fleurs du mal* because he accepts the bourgeois definition of the Good, hence his own activity as manifesting the unreal *and* evil. Sartre finds in Genet an even better example. In the latter's works, there is a perpetual shift between the esthete, the criminal and the mystic (or saint), a shift which is half-ironical (Genet knows what he is doing: he is a *comédien)* and half-serious (he is nailed to the condition which society has imposed on him when he was a child: he is a *martyr).*

Thus the main theme in Genet's work, particularly in *The Maids* and *Deathwatch,* is alienation. The man who is integrated in a society may sleepily believe that he finds there a justification of his existence. He finds reality in his role, he coincides with his role; his existence is realized, redeemed in routine activities. But the man who has been given *and* who has accepted a marginal role is deprived of this easy justification. His incarnation remains gratuitous, absurd; he remains in the situation which Sartre has described in *Nausea.*

This is the meaning of the obscenity which, in Genet's works, is not intended to titillate the "normal" reader, but to nauseate him. For the obscene is the concrete manifestation of the absurd, of the gratuitous. The *body* justifies us, realizes us, for the body is active. *Flesh* permits only exhibitionism. Genet's homosexuality is likewise linked by Sartre to social conditions. Genet has spent most of his life in prison and the living conditions in prison tally nicely with the fact that bourgeois ethics frown on homosexuality.

When contingent existence cannot find a realization, when flesh cannot be justified, assumed and effaced by action, we are dealing with alienation. Genet's homosexuals play at being what they are not: "normal" men and women. In *Deathwatch,* the imprisoned criminals try to form a society; but the society of criminals is counterfeit; it is a revealing reflection of the "normal" society from which it draws its meaning and its very substance. In *The Maids,* the two maids (whom Genet wanted to be played by male actors) exist, in their *own* eyes, only with reference to their bourgeois mistress. In order to see themselves as they have agreed to be, in order to realize themselves, one of them has to play the role of the mistress when the latter is out. At the end, the maid who plays this role kills herself, thus trying at last to establish a reciprocity in the master-slave relationship. She is the saint, but an inverted saint, an inverted martyr: she kills herself in order to annihilate her god.

Now and then, anyone may experience alienation. In pain, the body ceases to be a tool to become a stranger; the body becomes gratuitous, unjustifiable flesh. The potency of the Christian myth comes from the fact that it promises a justification even for raw incarnation, even for the scandal of suffering. Sartre has stressed, and over-stressed, the alienation which the glance of another person may suffice to produce. In *Huis-Clos,* the three characters, who are in "hell," would need new actions to justify their past. But they are dead, have no future, and they try to make each other the judge, to make the other justify their existence. The structure and atmosphere of *Huis-Clos* are strikingly, and even suspiciously, similar to those of Genet's plays.

What is generally a transient experience is an obsession with Genet's characters. They are alienated, possessed by the other. Unlike the well-adjusted man of magazine psychologists, they know it. Unlike the man who tries to assume his existence, not only do they know it, but they remain fascinated by this alienation: they play the alienated beings that they are.

There is no salvation for Genet's characters, but Genet himself takes advantage of the perdition of his characters: since he is an artist. He finds a justification, a realization, he appropriates his alienated past by making words what was flesh, what could not be body. The central implicit symbol in his works is the rose on the dunghill, in the center of the cross. But Genet's esthetic salvation cannot make us quite forget that for even more unlucky people, there is no such rose. Genet's work is an emetic. Let it not be an opiate.

Genet has written poems, but it seems that in this respect, Cocteau's teaching

has not yielded remarkable results. Genet's particular brand of "poetry" finds a better field of expression in his novels. These novels, which are in fact hagiographies in the ambiguous meaning of the word (sacred-devilish, pure-obscene), are unfortunately as tiresome as Henry Miller's exhibitions, even though Genet's vision and talent are far more rich and potent than Miller's. Among Genet's works, my preference would thus go to these two plays, or rather to *The Maids,* for *Deathwatch* is but a rough copy of *The Maids.* The task of writing a play has made Genet strive toward a terseness and an intensity from which his art, essentially the art of the conjurer, benefits greatly.

The English translation, through no fault of the translator, stresses what may appear a flaw: the juxtaposition of conventional slang and sophisticated psychological analysis. This makes Genet's characters unlikely, especially in the second play: one of them, in particular, is very literate about his illiteracy. But then Genet himself is an unlikely character; his works are self-portraits (which may or may not detract from the value of his plays). Bourgeois esthetics are based on likelihood. It is fitting that Genet's esthetics should be based on unlikelihood, should be anti-classic rather than affirmatively romantic. Unlikelihood may be a revealing reflection of what passes for likelihood, in the same way that evil may be a revealing reflection of what passes for good.

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